WHAT ABOUT GOLF CARTS?

Golf carts are defined in section 320.01(22), Florida Statutes, as “a motor vehicle that is designed and manufactured for operation on a golf course for sporting or recreational purposes and that is not capable of exceeding speeds of 20 miles per hour.”

Golf carts may be operated on roadways that are designated for golf carts with a posted speed limit of 30 mph or less. This means only within communities designated as golf cart communities with signs posted stating as such.

Golf carts are not required to be titled or registered. Golf cart operators are not required to have a driver license; however, to operate a golf cart on designated public roadways, a person must be 14 years or older.

Golf carts can be converted to Low Speed Vehicles (LSVs), defined as “any four-wheeled vehicle whose top speed is greater than 20 miles per hour, but not greater than 25 miles per hour.” LSVs must have headlamps, front and rear turn signals; brake lights, tail lights; reflex reflectors, red – one each side and one on the rear; exterior mirror on the driver side and an interior rear-view mirror or exterior mirror on passenger side; parking brake; windshield; seat belt for each designated seat; and a vehicle identification number (VIN).

LSVs must be registered, titled and insured with personal injury protection (PIP) and property damage liability (PDL) insurance. Any person operating an LSV must have a valid driver license in their immediate possession.

HAVE FUN, BUT FOLLOW THE LAW

The purpose of this brochure is to provide information about the use of Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs) in Highlands County.

Our goal is to encourage safe and responsible OHV operation. Through education and compliance of state and local OHV laws, we hope to prevent injuries and protect the rights of property owners.

OHVs are not toys. Serious injury can result from improper use of OHVs, but with preparation and practice, OHVs can be an enjoyable form of outdoor recreation. Children under the age of 16 are required by law to wear a helmet and eye protection.

For more safety information, visit the ATV Safety Institute website at www.atvsafety.org
DEFINITIONS

There are many different types of vehicles used for recreational riding -- four-wheelers, motorcycles, off-road vehicles are all very popular. The state has specific definitions for each class of vehicles, but they all fall under the term of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs).

An all-terrain vehicle (ATV) is any motorized off-highway or all-terrain vehicle 50 inches or less in width, having a dry weight of 1,200 pounds or less, designed to travel on three or more non-highway tires, and manufactured for recreational use by one or more persons. A recreational off-highway vehicle (ROV) is any motorized recreational off-highway vehicle 65 inches or less in width, having a dry weight of 2,000 pounds or less, designed to travel on four or more non-highway tires, and manufactured for recreational use by one or more persons. The term “ROV” does not include a golf cart.

An off-highway motorcycle (OHM) is any motor vehicle used off the roads or highways of this state that has a seat or saddle for the use of the rider and is designed to travel with not more than two wheels in contact with the ground, but excludes a tractor or a moped.

The important thing to remember is that all of these are considered motor vehicles under state law, which means there are rules that must be followed.

WHERE CAN YOU LEGALLY RIDE OHVs?

The ONLY place OHVs can be legally ridden in Highlands County is on private property with the permission of the owner.

There are no public lands in Highlands County approved for OHV riding.

There are no public roads (paved or unpaved) in Highlands County where it is legal to operate an OHV. This includes the shoulders and rights-of-way adjoining roads.

Highlands County exempted itself from the state law allowing OHV operation on unpaved roads with speed limits under 35 mph (County Resolution 2006-229).

KNOW THE LAWS

• It is a felony to flee from law enforcement while operating an OHV.

• OHVs are considered motor vehicles and you can be criminally cited if you do not have a valid driver’s license.

• It is a civil infraction to ride an OHV on any public roadway, right of way or highway.

• OHVs must be issued a certificate of title if purchased after July 1, 2002.

• It is a criminal offense for a parent to allow a child who is under 16 to drive an OHV on a roadway.

• OHV passengers and operators under the age of 16 must wear a helmet and eye protection.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where can I legally ride?

On private property you own or have permission to use. There are no public roads where it is legal to ride. No public lands in Highlands County allow OHV riding. Consult the FWC website www.myfwc.com for information regarding which management areas in our state allow OHV activities.

Do I need to wear a helmet?

Riders under the age of 16 are required to wear a helmet and eye protection by law. It is strongly recommended riders of all ages wear a helmet and eye protection.

Will receiving a traffic citation affect a teenager when applying for their driver’s license?

Yes, the one-year period you are required to hold a learner’s permit will be extended for one year from the date of the conviction, or until you are 18 years old, whichever happens first.

What happens if I am stopped on a public roadway and I’m not a licensed driver?

It is a misdemeanor offense when an unlicensed driver operates a motor vehicle on a public roadway. A court appearance is required, which carries up to a $500 fine.

If I’m an unlicensed minor, will my parents get in trouble?

Yes, it is a misdemeanor offense when a parent or guardian causes or knowingly permits their child or ward under the age of 18 years to operate a motor vehicle on a public roadway. A court appearance is required, which carries up to a $500 fine.