



Traffic Services Section Michigan State Police Field Update #21

Providing Traffic Related Information and Services to Michigan Law Enforcement

Section Phone (517) 336-6171

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Non-Traditional and Alternative Vehicles

The rising cost of gasoline has created a proliferation of non-traditional vehicles being used for transportation. Some of these vehicles are street legal as manufactured, some can be modified and registered, and some are not street legal under any circumstances. They fall into three broad categories:

Electric Bicycles and Other Non-Traditional Mopeds

Mopeds are defined by [MCL 257.32b](#) as two- or three-wheeled vehicles with a motor (gasoline or electric) that does not exceed 50 cc (not applicable to electric motors), produces 2.0 brake horsepower (1500 watts) or less, is not capable of traveling faster than 30 mph on a level surface, and does not **require** the operator to shift gears. The law does not prohibit gear shifting mechanisms. Any vehicle with two or three wheels that exceeds these criteria becomes a [motorcycle](#) if equipped with a saddle or seat, or an [off-road vehicle](#) if not so equipped. Any vehicle that meets the definition can be registered with the Secretary of State (SOS) and legally operated on a street if it possesses all of the required equipment and if a [TR-54](#) form is completed by a police officer.

Golf Carts and Low-Speed Vehicles

A [low speed vehicle](#) is defined by [MCL 257.25b](#) as an electrically powered vehicle designed to be operated at a speed less than 35 mph with a capacity of no more than four occupants. They are limited to certain types of roads pursuant to [MCL 257.660](#). Some electric golf carts can be **extensively modified** and registered as low-speed vehicles, subject to the completion of a [TR-54](#) form by a police officer. Golf carts that don't possess the required equipment or are gasoline powered are [off-road vehicles](#) and **cannot be legally operated on any road**.

Off-Road Vehicles

There are several off-road vehicles that can be made street legal through **extreme** modification, including traditional dune buggies, the John Deere [Gator](#), Kawasaki [Mule](#), and Polaris [Ranger](#). If so modified, and a [TR-54](#) completed, these vehicles will be titled and registered as "assembled" vehicles rather than as the original brand name.

Registration, Insurance, and Licensing

Mopeds are exempt from the insurance requirement pursuant to MCL [257.801e\(1\)](#), but are required to be registered by SOS. Operators must possess a valid Operator, Chauffeur, or Moped License. Low-speed vehicles and modified off-road vehicles are required to be registered by SOS and insured. Operators must possess a valid Operator or Chauffeur License.

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[Speed Measurement Unit](#)

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