
What You Need to Know About Golf Carts and Neighborhood Electric Vehicles

State Law

1. A “golf cart”, as defined in Sec. 502.001(18) of the Texas Transportation Code, is a motor vehicle designed by the manufacturer primarily for transporting persons on a golf course.
2. Sec. 551.301 defines a "neighborhood electric vehicle" (NEV) as a vehicle that can attain a maximum speed of 35 miles per hour on a paved level surface and otherwise complies with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 500 (49 C.F.R. Section 571.500).
3. A person operating a motor vehicle, including golf carts, on a highway in this state must hold a driver’s license per Sec. 521.021 of the Texas Transportation Code.
4. The definition of “highway” according to the Texas Transportation Code Sec. 541.302(5) is the width between the boundary lines of a publicly maintained way any part of which is open to the public for vehicular travel. Therefore a driver’s license is required to operate a motor vehicle on any public roadway.
5. A golf carts and neighborhood electric vehicles are by definition motor vehicles and therefore must comply with all traffic laws, including speed limits, stop signs, and the prohibition against driving while intoxicated.
6. The Texas Transportation Code allows the operation of a golf cart or NEV vehicle in a master planned community (i.e. the neighborhoods of Harbor Oaks, Key Allegro, Rockport Country Club, and Spanish Woods), on a public or private beach, and on a public highway with a posted speed limit of no more than 35 mph; if the golf cart is operated during daylight hours and is not more than two (2) miles from its residence and is travelling to or from a golf course (see Sec. 551.403). Therefore, a golf cart operated in accordance to these limitations is only exempt from the City of Rockport ordinance, not the traffic law.
7. Sec. 551.404 of the Texas Transportation Code allows the City of Rockport to authorize the use of golf carts and NEVs within the city limits as long as the posted speed limit is not more than 35 mph and the golf cart must have the following required equipment: headlamps, tail lamps, reflectors, parking brake, and mirrors.
8. Sec. 551.405 of the Texas Transportation Code allows golf carts to cross over a road or street with a posted speed limit more than 35 mph.

City Ordinance

1. A city ordinance may be more restrictive and/ or specific than state law.
2. A golf cart or NEV operated under Rockport City ordinance is only authorized upon a public street or public right of way with a speed limit of 35 mph or less during daylight hours only with the required headlights and tail lights on.

3. A golf cart or NEV must have all the following equipment in order to be registered to operate within the City:
 - a. Headlamps
 - b. Tail lamps
 - c. Reflectors
 - i. At least two (2) red reflectors on the rear of the golf cart.
 - ii. At least one (1) amber reflector on each side closest to the front of the golf cart as possible.
 - d. Parking brake
 - e. Rear view mirror(s)
 - i. A golf cart or NEV must have at least two (2) side mirrors or one (1) rear view mirror mounted to the center of the inside of the cab.
 - f. Turn signals
 - g. A “slow moving vehicle” reflective triangle affixed to the rear
 - h. Seat belts
 - i. A flag on a six foot (6’) pole affixed to the rear
4. A golf cart or NEV’s required equipment must be verified and inspected by the Rockport Police Department.
5. An annual fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) shall be charged for the inspection and registration of the golf cart. The registration decal shall be affixed in the center of the “slow moving vehicle” reflective triangle. The registration will be valid for a period of one (1) year and will expire the following year, in the same month as it was received.
6. An operator must possess a valid driver’s license and obey all Texas laws and traffic regulations.
7. A golf cart must be covered by insurance equal to the current Texas requirement for a licensed motor vehicle. This coverage may be by a separate policy or covered by the owner’s homeowner’s insurance policy.
8. Within the city limits, golf carts and NEVs are prohibited on all sidewalks, hike and bike trails, and State of Texas roadways, including State Highway 35 and all Farm to Market roads, regardless of the speed limit on that section of the road.

Any questions or concerns regarding any of the requirements outlined above should be directed to the Rockport Police Department at (361) 729-1111.

City of Rockport Golf Cart and Neighborhood Electric Vehicle Regulations

What You'll Need, IF ...

Follow All Traffic Laws	Driver License & Insurance	City Permit	Head & Tail Lights	Side Reflectors	Parking Brake	Rearview Mirrors	Turn Signals	"Slow Moving Vehicle" Sign	Seatbelts	Rear Flag	Horn
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.. you are traveling to or from a golf course (2 miles one way or less)



... you are driving within a master-planned community that has covenants*



... you are traveling on a City road with a speed limit of 35 mph or less



*Master planned neighborhoods in Rockport include Harbor Oaks, Key Allegro, Rockport Country Club, and Spanish Woods

Regardless of where they are driven, golf carts and neighborhood electric vehicles MAY NOT:

1. Travel on a City road with a speed limit in excess of 35 mph
2. Drive on a sidewalk or hike & bike trail
3. Travel on ANY State roads (e.g. State Highway 35, FM 2165/Pearl Street, FM 1781, etc.), regardless of posted speed limit
4. Travel at night (i.e. between dusk and dawn)

Notes:

1. All-terrain, recreational off-highway vehicles, and utility vehicles are not allowed on any public road, street, thoroughfare, or bridge.
2. A "golf cart" is a motor vehicle designed by the manufacturer primarily for transporting persons on a golf course.
3. A "neighborhood electric vehicle" as a vehicle that can attain a maximum speed of 35 miles per hour on a paved level surface and otherwise complies with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 500 (49 C.F.R. Section 571.500).

Sources: Rockport Code of Ordinances Sec. 98-130 through 98-137; Texas Transportation Code Sec. 521.001(3), 521.021, 521.025, 551.403, 551.404(a), 601.051
Revised 10/23/12