



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BEHIND THE STAR

SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



All Purpose Vehicle Use in Union County

This is part three in a series of articles written to help explain different types of vehicles and the Ohio Laws that govern their use. In part one and part two, we discussed the definitions of what is and is not a golf cart, and a utility vehicle, and the operational rules of each. In part three, we will discuss all-purpose vehicles (APV), how they are licensed, and where they can be legally operated.

Perhaps the most important thing you need to determine is what type of vehicle do you own? Is it an all-purpose vehicle or it is a utility vehicle? This can be determined by examining your certificate of origin, your title, or the vehicle identification plate on the vehicle. Although these types of vehicles may look similar, the laws for all purpose vehicles and utility vehicles are not the same.

An all-purpose vehicle is defined as any self-propelled vehicle designed primarily for cross-country travel on land and water, or on more than one type of terrain, and steered by wheels or caterpillar treads, or any combination thereof, including vehicles that operate on a cushion of air, vehicles commonly known as all-terrain vehicles, all-season vehicles, mini-bikes, and trail bikes. All-purpose vehicles do not include utility vehicles as they are defined in the Ohio Revised Code or any vehicle principally used in playing golf.

Ohio law requires APV owners to register their vehicles and display a license plate and a validation sticker that is distinctly visible in order to operate them in the State of Ohio. There are exceptions to this law in which you are not required to register your APV. If the APV is operated exclusively on the owner's land or on land the owner has a contractual right to use, you are not required to register the APV. APV's are also exempt from registration if they are used primarily for agricultural purposes, when the owner qualifies for the current agricultural use valuation tax credit. However, if an agricultural APV is also used on any public land, trail, or right of way; then it would need to be registered. The registration and validation stickers for APV's are valid for three years and expire on the thirty first day of December in the third year after the date it was issued.

APV operators must have a valid driver's license to operate on public land or when operating in any road right of way or crossing a road. Anyone under the age of sixteen may operate an APV on private property but must be accompanied by a person that is at least eighteen years of age and has a valid driver's license. APV's must comply with all required equipment regulations and must be insured. APV operators must obey all traffic rules and regulations. The required equipment for APV's includes at least one working headlight, at least one working red tail light, adequate brakes, and a muffler system.

Ohio law states that APV's may operate on highways, county or township road systems whenever the local authority having jurisdiction over such roadway so permits. At this time, no local

authority in Union County permits APV's to operate on highways, county or township roads. APV's may be operated off and alongside a road or highway for limited distances from the point of unloading to the point at which the APV is intended and authorized to be operated. In addition, they can be operated on the berm or shoulder of a highway, county road, or township road where the terrain permits such operation to be undertaken safely and without the necessity of entering any traffic lane while traveling from one operational area to another such area. APV's may cross a roadway whenever the crossing can be made safely and will not interfere with the movement of vehicular traffic approaching from any direction on the roadway and provided that the operator yields the right-of-way to any approaching traffic that presents an immediate hazard.

Finally, APV's are prohibited in certain areas. APV's cannot be operated on private property, unless permission has been given by the property owner or person having the right to possession of the property. They cannot be operated on railroads or railroad right of ways, and not while transporting a firearm, bow, or other hunting implement, unless it is unloaded and encased. APV's cannot operate from sunset to sunrise, unless they are equipped with the required head and taillights. APV's cannot be used to chase, pursue, capture, or kill any type of animal or wildfowl. And finally, they cannot be operated on any state-owned land unless the land is posted with signage permitting such operation.

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