



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BEHIND THE STAR

SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



Golf Carts, Utility Vehicles, All Purpose Vehicles, Slow Moving Vehicles – What are the Laws?

Recently, the Sheriff's Office has seen a great deal of confusion about all these types of vehicles and how they can be operated legally in Ohio. "There is a lot of misinformation circulating not only in Union County, but around the State of Ohio about the titling and operation of these vehicles that we hope to clear up," said Sheriff Jamie Patton. This is the first installment of a four-part series of articles that will explain these vehicles and the Ohio Laws that govern their use.

In order to understand the laws and rules for golf carts, utility vehicles, all purpose vehicles, and slow moving vehicles; we need to know how they are defined in the law. Ohio law refers to golf carts as low speed or underspeed vehicles. Utility vehicles can be referred to by a number of different names such as side by sides, three wheelers, four wheelers, all terrain vehicles or ATV's, Rangers®, Gators®, Pioneers®, RZR's, Trackers®, Wolverines®, Artic Cats®, and many other names. Slow moving vehicles, utilizing the traditional orange triangle, are most often thought of as agricultural equipment.

What is a golf cart?

This might sound like a strange question. Wouldn't it be obvious? The answer is yes and no. The Ohio Revised Code specifically defines what a golf cart is. By definition it's an under-speed vehicle, which means it's a three or four wheeled vehicle, with a top attainable speed on a paved level surface of not more than twenty miles per hour and that has a gross vehicle weight rating less than three thousand pounds. The certificate of origin or title for this type of vehicle will show its body code is classified as a low speed or under speed vehicle and may be abbreviated as LS or US.

What is a utility vehicle?

A utility vehicle is defined as a self-propelled vehicle designed with a bed, principally used for the purpose of transporting material or cargo in connection with construction, agricultural, forestry, grounds maintenance, lawn and garden, materials handling, or similar activities. The certificate of origin or title for this type of vehicle will show its body code is classified as a utility vehicle and may be abbreviated as UV.

What is an all-purpose vehicle?

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 vehicle" does not include a utility vehicle as defined in the Ohio Revised Code or

any vehicle principally used in playing golf. The certificate of origin or title for this type of vehicle will show that it is classified as an all-purpose vehicle and may be abbreviated as AT.

What is a slow-moving vehicle?

Slow moving vehicles are considered to be all boat trailers, farm machinery, and other machinery, including all road construction machinery, that operate on a street or highway...., which is designed for operation at a speed of twenty-five miles per hour or less and displays a triangular slow-moving vehicle emblem (SMV). The emblem shall be mounted so that it is visible from a distance of not less than five hundred feet to the rear.

What is considered farm machinery?

Farm machinery are all machines and tools that are used in the production, harvesting, and care of farm products, and includes trailers that are used to transport agricultural produce or agricultural production materials between a local place of storage or supply and the farm, agricultural tractors, threshing machinery, hay-baling machinery, corn shellers, hammermills, and machinery used in the production of horticultural, agricultural, and vegetable products.

In our next article, we will discuss the inspection and operational requirements for golf carts and utility vehicles.

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