



SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Fort Bend County, Texas

TROY E. NEHLS
Sheriff

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July 9, 2013

The purpose of this memo is to provide you information regarding the operation of golf carts on public roadways. Certain relevant sections of the Texas Transportation Code which regulate the operation of golf carts are referenced below. It is a Class C misdemeanor to violate these sections and the Sheriff's Office will respond to complaints of illegal operation and take enforcement action when appropriate and at the discretion of the responding Deputy.

502.001 DEFINITIONS

"Golf cart" means a motor vehicle designed primarily for transporting persons on a golf course.
"Highway" is used generally in Texas and refers to all public roadways.

521.021 LICENSE REQUIRED

A person, other than a person expressly exempted under this chapter, may not operate a motor vehicle on a highway in this State unless the person holds a Driver's License.

Translation: A valid Driver's License is required to operate a golf cart on a public roadway.

521.458 PERMITTING UNAUTHORIZED PERSON TO DRIVE

A. A person may not knowingly permit or cause a person's child or ward who is less than 18 years of age to operate a motor vehicle on a highway in violation of this chapter.

B. A person may not authorize or knowingly permit a motor vehicle owned by or under the control of the person to be operated on a highway by any person in violation of this chapter.

Translation: You cannot authorize your child to operate the golf cart on the roadway unless he has a Learner's Permit and you are with him or he has a valid Driver's License.

Sec. 551.403. LIMITED OPERATION

(a) An operator may operate a golf cart:

(1) in a master planned community:

- (A) that has in place a uniform set of restrictive covenants; and
- (B) for which a county or municipality has approved a plat;

(2) on a public or private beach; or

(3) on a public highway for which the posted speed limit is not more than 35 miles per hour, if the golf cart is operated:

- (A) during the daytime; and
- (B) not more than two miles from the location where the golf cart is usually parked and for transportation to or from a golf course.

(b) The Texas Department of Transportation or a county or municipality may prohibit the operation of a golf cart on a public highway if the department or the governing body of the county or municipality determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

Translation: Firethorne meets the requirements of 551.403 meaning the golf cart may be operated on a public street and registration is not required. (No license plate) (GA-0966)

601.052 EXCEPTIONS TO THE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REQUIREMENT

A. 602.051 does not apply to:

1. Operation of a motor vehicle that:

B. Is used only for exhibitions, club activities, parades and other functions of public interest and not for regular transportation; and

C. For which the owner files with the Department an affidavit signed by the owner that the vehicle is a collector's item and used only as described in (B).

2. Is a golf cart not required to be registered under 502.0071

Translation: Insurance is not required, but an operator would still be liable for damage.

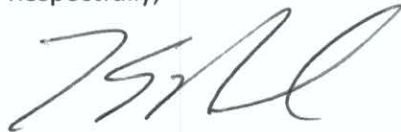
MISCELLANEOUS POINTS

1. Golf carts are not required to have a "slow vehicle" emblem unless they are operated on roads with a speed limit of 35 or higher (a relevant example includes FM 1463).
2. Lights, brake lights, turn signals, etc. are not required.
3. Golf carts may not be operated on sidewalks.
4. Golf carts may not be operated on trails or water retention areas owned by the Municipal Utility District. Operation of **any motorized vehicle** on these areas is a violation of the Texas Water Code. (Class C Misdemeanor)

This memo is intended only to inform residents of the law governing golf carts and not to discourage anyone from the lawful use of golf carts. Specific questions may be directed to Major Chad Norvell at 281-341-4705 or chad.norvell@fortbendcountytexas.gov.

Non-emergency calls for service should be made to 281-341-4665. Emergency 911.

Respectfully,



Sheriff Troy E. Nehls

