



Sunnyvale Police Department Rules and Regulations Involving Golf Carts





Q: What need exists for enforcement of golf cart regulations?

A: Many residents have expressed concerns about children driving golf carts in an unsafe manner. In addition, Sunnyvale Police Officers have witnessed unsafe golf cart driving by juveniles, who often are unfamiliar with basic rules of the road and driver courtesy. The intent is to enforce existing state laws now to avert possible future tragedies.

Q: What is Texas law regarding golf carts as motor vehicles?

A: Two provisions in the Texas Transportation Code (TC 502.001 and TC 551.401) establish golf carts as motor vehicles. The full definition of a motor vehicle under state law includes cars, trucks, motorcycles, golf carts, and neighborhood electric vehicles.

Q: Is it legal to operate a golf cart on a public street?

A: Under certain circumstances, it is legal to operate a golf cart on a public street. Golf carts may be driven on a public highway when the following conditions are met:

- The posted speed limit is no more than 35 mph
 - The golf cart is being operated in a master planned community that has in place a uniform set of restrictive covenants
 - If going to a golf course, a golf cart may not travel more than two miles from where the golf cart is usually parked
 - Operation is only legal during the daytime
- (Texas Transportation Code Section 551.403)



Q: Does the law require the operator of a golf cart to have a driver's license?

A: **Yes.** In 2019, the state of Texas classified golf carts as motor vehicles. Operators of golf carts are now considered operators of a motor vehicle. Texas requires all operators of a motor vehicle to have a driver's license. (Texas Transportation Code Section 521.021)

Q: What provision in Texas law requires golf carts to have a license plate?

A: TC 551.402 requires that golf carts driven on a public street have a state-issued license plate.

Texas Department of Motor Vehicles does not title and register golf carts, but golf carts are required to receive a golf cart license plate.



Q: Does the driver of a golf cart have to have liability insurance?

A: **No.** In fact, the law specifically exempts golf carts from holding normal motor vehicle liability insurance. (Texas Transportation Code Section 601.052)

Does a golf cart have to have a slow-moving vehicle placard?

A: **Yes.** Golf carts driven on a public road must have a slow-moving vehicle placard. These are commonly referred to as "orange triangles" and are often used on farm and construction equipment.

Special Note on Orange Placards

--Must have a reflective surface designed to be clearly visible in daylight or at night from the light of standard automobile headlamps at a distance





of at least 500 feet;

--Must be mounted base down on the rear of the vehicle and at a height that does not impair the visibility of the emblem

Q: Can a driver with a learner's permit operate a golf cart on a public street?

A: **Yes**, so long as he or she is accompanied in the front seat by a licensed driver who is at least 18 years old. This is the same as for the operation of any motor vehicle on a public street.

Q: Are golf carts required to have safety equipment such as headlights, taillights, turn signals, and seatbelts?

A: **No**, That equipment is not required for golf carts.

Q: Are golf carts subject to any other Texas motor vehicle laws?

A: **Yes**, because golf carts are included in the state's definition of a motor vehicle. When on a public street, the driver of a golf cart must obey all traffic laws including stop or yield signs, speed limits, and other posted warnings. They must pull to the side of the road to yield to emergency vehicles and are required to signal turns either with blinker signals or hand signals.

Q: What is the fine for operating a golf cart without a driver's license?

A: A citation for operating a motor vehicle (including a golf cart) on a public street without a valid driver's license can result in a fine set by Texas law (TC 521.025) as an amount of not more than \$200 for the first and second offenses, and not more than \$500 for the third offense in a single year.



Q: What if my unlicensed child drives my golf cart without my knowledge?

A: The child and/or parents are subject to receiving a citation even if the parents did not know the child was operating the golf cart on a public street. This also is true if an unlicensed child were to operate any other type of motorized vehicle without parental consent or knowledge. In both instances, parents may be subject to civil and criminal penalties.

Q: Must a Golf Cart be inspected?

A: A vehicle required to display a slow-moving vehicle emblem is not subject to inspection. Id. § 548.052.

Q: Where do I obtain a Golf Cart License?

A: At the Dallas County Tax Office: located at **Address:**
1201 Elm Street, Ste 2600, Dallas, TX 75270
Hours: Open 8AM · 4:30PM
Phone: (214) 653-7811



Q: How much does it cost for a License Plate?

A: \$10.00



Q: If I sell a Golf Cart that already has a Texas License Plate on it, will the new owners need to obtain a new plate?

A: **No**, once a license plate is issued to a golf cart it remains with the cart. The plate would only need to be replaced if it became damaged, lost or stolen.

Special Notes: The term “Master Planned Community that has in place a uniform set of restrictive covenants” should be emphasized. “Uniform Set of Restrictive Covenants” has been defined as a community that has a homeowner’s association that has bylaws and covenants.

Unless driving to or from a golf course, persons operating a golf cart under this section ***must stay within their Master Planned Community.***

Exiting a Master Planned Community and entering another neighborhood is not allowed per these statutes. Furthermore, exiting a Master Planned Community to go to a store, restaurant, or school that is outside of the Master Planned Community is prohibited.