

ATVs, Golf Carts, Pocket Bikes and More: Know What You Can Drive on Maryland Roadways — And What You Can't

A pocket bike, all-terrain vehicle or golf cart might seem like a fun and convenient way to get around town or around the streets of your neighborhood but by law, many of these and similar modes of transportation can only be operated on your own property. The Charles County Sheriff's Office is reminding citizens which types of vehicles are permitted on Maryland roadways and which are illegal.

Maryland vehicle law defines motor vehicles as being self-propelled or propelled by electric power obtained from overhead electrical wires and which are not operated on rails. Under this definition, mopeds and motor scooters are not considered motor vehicles. ATVs, motorized skateboards, motorized bicycles, motorized mini-bikes, go-carts and golf carts are considered motor vehicles by law but they cannot be registered. Any vehicle that is not registered in the state of Maryland may not be driven on Maryland highways. Maryland vehicle law defines highways as the entire width between the boundary lines of any way or thoroughfare of which any part is used by the public for vehicular travel, whether or not the way or thoroughfare has been dedicated to the public and accepted by any proper authority. **This means ATVs, motorized skateboards, motorized bicycles, motorized mini-bikes, go-carts and golf carts can only be driven on private property with the permission of the owner or agent.**

Anyone who violates these laws will be subject to the following applicable citations:

- * Driving an unregistered vehicle on a highway, a \$280 fine.
- * Driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle on a highway without the required license and authorization, which requires an appearance in court
- * Operating a moped or motor scooter without the required license or permit, also a must-appear offense
- * Causing a child or ward under age 15 to drive a motor vehicle on a highway, a \$290 fine
- * Knowingly permitting a child or ward under 15 to drive a motor vehicle on a highway, a \$290 fine
- * Driving a vehicle on a sidewalk and sidewalk area where prohibited, a \$70 fine
- * Parent or Guardian authorizing a minor or ward to violate bicycle, play vehicle or motor scooter laws, a \$40 fine
- * Parent or Guardian knowingly permitting a minor or ward to violate bicycle, play vehicle or motor scooter laws, a \$40 fine
- * Riding a bicycle or motor scooter on a roadway with a maximum posted speed above 50 miles per hour, expressway or controlled access highway, a \$40 fine
- * Riding a bicycle or motor scooter on a roadway where a smooth bike lane or shoulder is available, a \$80 fine

To report someone operating a vehicle illegally, contact the Charles County Sheriff's Office at 301-932-2222 in La Plata, 301-743-2222 in Indian Head and 301-932-7777 in Waldorf.