

5-9-2016

## **Chapter 155: VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC**

### **Article VI: Operation of Golf Carts and Utility Vehicles on Public Highways**

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**§ 155-29 Authority to regulate.**

Pursuant to § 46.2-916.2 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended, the Town of Grottoes may by ordinance authorize the operation of golf carts and utility vehicles on designated public highways within its boundaries, and impose limitations and restrictions on the operation of golf carts and utility vehicles upon public highways within the Town of Grottoes.

**§ 155-30 Definitions.**

The following terms, wherever used herein, shall have the respective meanings assigned to them unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context:

## **GOLF CART**

A self-propelled vehicle having at least four wheels which is designed to transport persons playing golf and their equipment on a golf course.

## **UTILITY VEHICLE**

A vehicle that is powered by a motor and is designed for off-road use and is used as a farm, agricultural, or horticultural service vehicle, generally having four or more wheels, bench seating for the operator and a passenger, a steering wheel for control, and a cargo bed. Must be classified by the manufacturer as a Utility Vehicle and not an All-Terrain Vehicle. Does not include pickup or panel trucks, golf carts, riding lawn mowers, and farm tractors.

## **PUBLIC HIGHWAY**

The entire width between the boundary lines of every way or place open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel in the Town of Grottoes, including streets, roads, and alleys.

### **§ 155-31 Required safety equipment.**

All safety equipment required for inspection under §155-34 must remain on golf carts and utility vehicles at all times when operated on any public highway or town property.

### **§ 155-32 Golf cart and utility vehicle operation.**

No person shall operate a golf cart or utility vehicle on or over any public highway or town property in the Town of Grottoes except as provided in this article.

### **§ 155-33 Designation of Town public highways for golf cart and utility vehicle operation**

A. Pursuant to § 46.2-916.2 of the Code of Virginia, the Grottoes' Town Council may authorize, by ordinance, the operation of golf carts and utility vehicles on designated public highways within the Town after: i) considering the speed, volume and character of motor vehicle traffic using such street; and ii) determining that golf cart and utility vehicle operation on particular Town public highways is compatible with state and local transportation plans and consistent with the commonwealth's statewide pedestrian policy. No Town public highway shall be designated for use by golf carts and utility vehicles if such golf cart and utility vehicle operations will impede the safe and efficient flow of motor vehicle traffic, or if the public highway's speed limit is greater than 25 miles per hour. Any public highways with a speed limit of 25 MPH or less shall be considered designated for golf cart and utility vehicle use.

**§ 155-34 Town safety inspection.**

A. Golf carts and utility vehicles shall pass an annual safety inspection. Such safety inspection shall be conducted by the Grottoes Police Department and shall only cover the following items:

- (1) Headlights, tail lights, brake lights and turn signals.
- (2) Rubber or equivalent tires.
- (3) Windshield wipers if equipped with permanent windshield.
- (4) Horn, steering wheel, adequate steering gear, brakes, emergency or parking brake, one mirror, adequately fixed driver's seat.
- (5) All other factory installed safety or mechanical systems, including checking for gasoline or propane leaks.
- (6) Safety lap belts for all occupants.
- (7) Slow moving vehicle emblem.

B. The owner/operator of the golf cart or utility vehicle shall be responsible for scheduling an appointment with the Grottoes Police Department for the safety inspection. The owner/operator shall be required to bring the completed inspection certification to the Town Offices, along with proof of insurance, as more particularly detailed below, and obtain a sticker to be placed in plain view on the driver's side front portion of the golf cart or utility vehicle. The Town shall be entitled to charge a reasonable registration fee, which fee shall be included in Chapter A171 of the Town Code.

**§ 155-35 Insurance required.**

Every golf cart or utility vehicle and driver thereof shall be covered by an insurance policy. Such policy shall meet the minimum liability amounts contained in § 46.2-472 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended, and provide coverage during the operation of the golf cart or utility vehicle upon public highways.

**§ 155-36 Operation on public highways.**

It is unlawful to operate a golf cart or utility vehicle on a public highway within the Town of Grottoes unless the following requirements are met:

- A. No person shall operate a golf cart or utility vehicle on a Town public highway unless that public

highway is designated for golf cart and utility vehicle operations.

B. No golf cart or utility vehicle shall be driven across any public highway where the public highway being crossed has a posted speed limit of more than 25 miles per hour unless the public highway intersection is controlled by a traffic light and has a posted speed limit of no more than 35 miles per hour.

C. All occupants must wear seatbelts at all times while operating on public highways or Town property.

D. Golf carts and utility vehicles shall be operated on public highways only between sunrise and sunset unless  
equipped with such lights as required in Article 3 (§46.2-1010 *et seq.*) of Chapter 10 of Title 46.2 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

E. No person may operate a golf cart or utility vehicle on public highways or Town property unless they have in their possession a valid driver's license and, then, only in accordance with such driver's license.

F. Golf carts and utility vehicles must be operated in accordance with all applicable state and local laws and ordinances, including all laws, regulations and ordinances pertaining to the possession and use of alcoholic beverages.

G. Only the number of people the golf cart or utility vehicle is designed to seat may ride on a golf cart or utility vehicle. Additionally, passengers shall not be carried on the part of a golf cart designed to carry golf bags or on the cargo area of utility vehicles.

H. Golf carts or utility vehicles shall not be operated on any bicycle trails or sidewalks within the Town limits.

I. Golf carts and utility vehicles shall not be operated on any walking trails and must remain on roadways or parking areas while operated within Town Parks.

J. Every golf cart and utility vehicle, whenever operated on a public highway, shall display a slow-moving vehicle emblem in conformity with Virginia Code §46.2-1081.

K. The Chief of Police, or his designee, may prohibit the operation of golf carts and utility vehicles on any public highway if the Chief, or his designee, determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

### **§ 155-37 Exceptions.**

The limitations set forth in § 155-36 above shall not apply to golf carts and utility vehicles being operated to the extent necessary for Town of Grottoes employees and Town of Grottoes contractors to fulfill a governmental purpose, or as otherwise authorized by the Town Manager or his designee, provided the golf cart or utility vehicle is not operated on a Town public highway with a posted speed limit over 35 miles per hour in accordance with Virginia Code 46.2-916.3B.2.

### **§ 155-38 Local vehicle license.**

No golf cart or utility vehicle shall be operated on public highways or Town property until the owner has:

- A. Obtained a vehicle license by April 15<sup>th</sup>. No vehicle license shall be issued to the owner of the golf cart until the vehicle license fee has been paid in accordance with Chapter A171 of the Code of the Town of Grottoes.
- B. Presented evidence that the golf cart or utility vehicle is insured in accordance with the requirements of § 155- 35.
- C. Received and passed an annual safety inspection of the golf cart as required by § 155-34.

### **§ 155-39 Liability disclaimer.**

This Article is adopted to address the interest of public safety. Golf carts and utility vehicles are not designed or manufactured to be used on the public highways and the Town of Grottoes in no way advocates or endorses their operation on public highways. The Town of Grottoes, by regulating such operation, is merely trying to address obvious safety issues, and adoption of this Article is not to be relied upon as a determination that operation on public highways is safe or advisable if done in accordance with this Article. All persons who operate or ride upon golf carts and utility vehicles on public highways do so at their own risk and peril, and must be observant of, and attentive to, the safety of themselves and others, including their passengers, other motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The Town of Grottoes has no liability under any theory of liability and the Town assumes no liability for permitting golf carts and utility vehicles to be operated on the public highways under the special legislation granted by the Virginia General Assembly. Any person who operates a golf cart or utility vehicle is responsible for procuring liability insurance sufficient to cover the risk involved in using a golf cart or utility vehicle on the public highway.