

# STATE OF TEXAS -- TRANSPORTATION CODE Chapter 551

## TITLE 7. VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC

### SUBTITLE C. RULES OF THE ROAD

#### CHAPTER 551. OPERATION OF **BICYCLES**, MOPEDS, AND PLAY VEHICLES

##### SUBCHAPTER A. APPLICATION OF CHAPTER

Sec. 551.001. PERSONS AFFECTED. Except as provided by Subchapter C, this chapter applies only to a person operating a bicycle on:

- (1) a highway; or
- (2) a path set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1318, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 551.002. MOPED AND ELECTRIC BICYCLE INCLUDED. A provision of this subtitle applicable to a bicycle also applies to:

- (1) a moped, other than a provision that by its nature cannot apply to a moped; and
- (2) an electric bicycle, other than a provision that by its nature cannot apply to an electric bicycle.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1085, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

##### SUBCHAPTER B. REGULATION OF OPERATION

Sec. 551.101. RIGHTS AND DUTIES. (a) A person operating a bicycle has the rights and duties applicable to a driver operating a vehicle under this subtitle, unless:

- (1) a provision of this chapter alters a right or duty; or
- (2) a right or duty applicable to a driver operating a vehicle cannot by its nature apply to a person operating a bicycle.

(b) A parent of a child or a guardian of a ward may not knowingly permit the child or ward to violate this subtitle.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 551.102. GENERAL OPERATION. (a) A person operating a bicycle shall ride only on or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle.

(b) A person may not use a bicycle to carry more persons than the bicycle is designed or equipped to carry.

(c) A person operating a bicycle may not use the bicycle to carry an object that prevents the person from operating the bicycle with at least one hand on the handlebars of the bicycle.

(d) A person operating a bicycle, coaster, sled, or toy vehicle or using roller skates may not attach either the person or the bicycle, coaster, sled, toy vehicle, or roller skates to a streetcar or vehicle on a roadway.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 551.103. OPERATION ON ROADWAY. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a person operating a bicycle on a roadway who is moving slower than the other traffic on the roadway shall ride as near as practicable to the right curb or edge of the roadway, unless:

(1) the person is passing another vehicle moving in the same direction;

(2) the person is preparing to turn left at an intersection or onto a private road or driveway;

(3) a condition on or of the roadway, including a fixed or moving object, parked or moving vehicle, pedestrian, animal, or surface hazard prevents the person from safely riding next to the right curb or edge of the roadway; or

(4) the person is operating a bicycle in an outside lane that is:

(A) less than 14 feet in width and does not have a designated bicycle lane adjacent to that lane; or

(B) too narrow for a bicycle and a motor vehicle to safely travel side by side.

(b) A person operating a bicycle on a one-way roadway with two or more marked traffic lanes may ride as near as practicable to the left curb or edge of the roadway.

(c) Persons operating bicycles on a roadway may ride two abreast. Persons riding two abreast on a laned roadway shall ride in a single lane. Persons riding two abreast may not impede the normal and reasonable flow of

traffic on the roadway. Persons may not ride more than two abreast unless they are riding on a part of a roadway set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1085, Sec. 13, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1085, Sec. 10, 13, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 551.104. SAFETY EQUIPMENT. (a) A person may not operate a bicycle unless the bicycle is equipped with a brake capable of making a braked wheel skid on dry, level, clean pavement.

(b) A person may not operate a bicycle at nighttime unless the bicycle is equipped with:

(1) a lamp on the front of the bicycle that emits a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet in front of the bicycle; and

(2) on the rear of the bicycle:

(A) a red reflector that is:

(i) of a type approved by the department; and

(ii) visible when directly in front of lawful upper beams of motor vehicle headlamps from all distances from 50 to 300 feet to the rear of the bicycle; or

(B) a lamp that emits a red light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear of the bicycle.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1085, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 551.105. COMPETITIVE RACING. (a) In this section, "bicycle" means a nonmotorized vehicle propelled by human power.

(b) A sponsoring organization may hold a competitive bicycle race on a public road only with the approval of the appropriate local law enforcement agencies.

(c) The local law enforcement agencies and the sponsoring organization may agree on safety regulations governing the movement of bicycles during a competitive race or during training for a competitive race, including the permission for bicycle operators to ride abreast.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 551.106. REGULATION OF ELECTRIC BICYCLES. (a) The department or a local authority may not prohibit the use of an electric bicycle on a highway that is used primarily by motor vehicles. The department or a local authority may prohibit the use of an electric bicycle on a highway used primarily by pedestrians.

(b) The department shall establish rules for the administration of this section.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1085, Sec. 12, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

#### SUBCHAPTER C. ELECTRIC PERSONAL ASSISTIVE MOBILITY DEVICES

Sec. 551.201. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "electric personal assistive mobility device" means a two non-tandem wheeled device designed for transporting one person that is:

- (1) self-balancing; and
- (2) propelled by an electric propulsion system with an average power of 750 watts or one horsepower.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1318, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 551.202. OPERATION ON ROADWAY. (a) A person may operate an electric personal assistive mobility device on a residential street, roadway, or public highway with a speed limit of 30 miles per hour or less only:

- (1) while making a direct crossing of a highway in a marked or unmarked crosswalk;
- (2) where no sidewalk is available; or
- (3) when so directed by a traffic control device or by a law enforcement officer.

(b) A person may operate an electric personal assistive mobility device on a path set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles.

(c) Any person operating an electric personal assistive mobility device on a residential street, roadway, or public highway shall ride as close as practicable to the right-hand edge.

(d) Except as otherwise provided by this section, provisions of this title applicable to the operation of bicycles apply to the operation of electric personal assistive mobility devices.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1318, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 551.203. SIDEWALKS. A person may operate an electric personal assistive mobility device on a sidewalk.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1318, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

#### SUBCHAPTER D. NEIGHBORHOOD ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Text of section as amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., R.S., Ch. [281](#), Sec. 2.86

For text of section as amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., R.S., Ch. [1242](#), Sec. 2, see other Sec. 551.301.

Sec. 551.301. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Neighborhood electric vehicle" means a vehicle that can attain a maximum speed of 35 miles per hour on a paved level surface and otherwise complies with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 500 (49 C.F.R. Section 571.500).

(2) "Motor assisted scooter":

(A) means a self-propelled device with:

(i) at least two wheels in contact with the ground during operation;

(ii) a braking system capable of stopping the device under typical operating conditions;

(iii) a gas or electric motor not exceeding 40 cubic centimeters;

(iv) a deck designed to allow a person to stand or sit while operating the device; and

(v) the ability to be propelled by human power alone; and

(B) does not include a pocket bike or minimotorbike.

(3) "Pocket bike or minimotorbike" means a self-propelled vehicle that is equipped with an electric motor or internal combustion engine

having a piston displacement of less than 50 cubic centimeters, is designed to propel itself with not more than two wheels in contact with the ground, has a seat or saddle for the use of the operator, is not designed for use on a highway, and is ineligible for a certificate of title under Chapter 501. The term does not include:

- (A) a moped or motorcycle;
- (B) an electric bicycle or motor-driven cycle, as defined by Section 541.201;
- (C) a motorized mobility device, as defined by Section 542.009;
- (D) an electric personal assistive mobility device, as defined by Section 551.201; or
- (E) a neighborhood electric vehicle.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1320, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1325, Sec. 19.07, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. [281](#), Sec. 2.86, eff. June 14, 2005.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [722](#), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Text of section as amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., R.S., Ch. [1242](#), Sec. 2

For text of section as amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., R.S., Ch. [281](#), Sec. 2.86, see other Sec. 551.301.

Sec. 551.301. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "neighborhood electric vehicle" means a vehicle subject to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 500 (49 C.F.R. Section 571.500).

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1320, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1325, Sec. 19.07, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. [1242](#), Sec. 2, eff. June 18, 2005.

Sec. 551.302. REGISTRATION. The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles may adopt rules relating to the registration and issuance of license plates to neighborhood electric vehicles.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1320, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [933](#), Sec. 2I.01, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 551.303. OPERATION ON ROADWAYS. (a) A neighborhood electric vehicle may be operated only on a street or highway for which the posted speed limit is 45 miles per hour or less. A neighborhood electric vehicle may cross a road or street at an intersection where the road or street has a posted speed limit of more than 45 miles per hour. A neighborhood electric vehicle may not be operated on a street or highway at a speed that exceeds the lesser of:

- (1) the posted speed limit; or
- (2) 35 miles per hour.

(b) A county or municipality may prohibit the operation of a neighborhood electric vehicle on a street or highway if the governing body of the county or municipality determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

(c) The Texas Department of Transportation may prohibit the operation of a neighborhood electric vehicle on a highway if that department determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1320, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [722](#), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 551.304. APPLICATION OF SUBCHAPTER TO POCKET BIKE OR MINIMOTORBIKE. This subchapter may not be construed to authorize the operation of a pocket bike or minimotorbike on any:

- (1) highway, road, or street;
- (2) path set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles; or
- (3) sidewalk.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. [281](#), Sec. 2.87, eff. June 14, 2005.

SUBCHAPTER E. MOTOR-ASSISTED SCOOTERS

Sec. 551.351. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "motor-assisted scooter" means a self-propelled device with:

- (1) at least two wheels in contact with the ground during operation;
- (2) a braking system capable of stopping the device under typical operating conditions;
- (3) a gas or electric motor not exceeding 40 cubic centimeters;
- (4) a deck designed to allow a person to stand or sit while operating the device; and
- (5) the ability to be propelled by human power alone.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. [1242](#), Sec. 3, eff. June 18, 2005.

Sec. 551.352. OPERATION ON ROADWAYS OR SIDEWALKS. (a) A motor-assisted scooter may be operated only on a street or highway for which the posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less. The motor-assisted scooter may cross a road or street at an intersection where the road or street has a posted speed limit of more than 35 miles per hour.

(b) A county or municipality may prohibit the operation of a motor-assisted scooter on a street, highway, or sidewalk if the governing body of the county or municipality determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

(c) The department may prohibit the operation of a motor-assisted scooter on a highway if it determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

(d) A person may operate a motor-assisted scooter on a path set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles or on a sidewalk. Except as otherwise provided by this section, a provision of this title applicable to the operation of a bicycle applies to the operation of a motor-assisted scooter.

(e) A provision of this title applicable to a motor vehicle does not apply to a motor-assisted scooter.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. [1242](#), Sec. 3, eff. June 18, 2005.



Sec. 551.401. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter, "golf cart" and "public highway" have the meanings assigned by Section 502.001.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [1136](#), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 551.402. REGISTRATION NOT AUTHORIZED. (a) The Texas Department of Transportation may not register a golf cart for operation on a public highway regardless of whether any alteration has been made to the golf cart.

(b) The department may issue license plates for a golf cart only as authorized by Section 504.510.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [1136](#), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2009.

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.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [1136](#), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 551.404. OPERATION IN MUNICIPALITIES. (a) In addition to the operation authorized by Section 551.403, the governing body of a municipality

may allow an operator to operate a golf cart on all or part of a public highway that:

- (1) is in the corporate boundaries of the municipality; and
- (2) has a posted speed limit of not more than 35 miles per

hour.

(b) A golf cart operated under Subsection (a) must have the following equipment:

- (1) headlamps;
- (2) taillamps;
- (3) reflectors;
- (4) parking brake; and
- (5) mirrors.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [1136](#), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 551.405. CROSSING CERTAIN ROADWAYS. A golf cart may cross intersections, including a road or street that has a posted speed limit of more than 35 miles per hour.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [1136](#), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2009.