

Houston County Ordinance No. 17

AN ORDINANCE FOR REGULATING THE USE AND OPERATION OF SPECIAL VEHICLES ON COUNTY ROADS, REQUIRING A LICENSE, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF.

The County Board of Houston County, Minnesota, ordains:

Section 1. Definitions.

In this ordinance, the following terms have the meanings given unless otherwise specified:

Subd. 1. All-terrain vehicle (ATV) has the meaning given in Minnesota Statute § 84.92, subd. 8;

Subd. 2. County means the County of Houston, Minnesota;

Subd. 3. County road means all county highways and county state-aid highways, and does not include United States Highways or Minnesota Trunk Highways;

Subd. 4. Golf cart means a small, motorized vehicle with four wheels powered by either an electric or a gas motor, commonly used for golfers and their equipment on a golf course;

Subd. 5. Public road right-of-way has the meaning given in Minnesota Statute § 84.92, subd. 6a;

Subd. 6. Traveled portion means the paved portion of a paved county road and the portion of unpaved county roads used for vehicle travel, but does not include any portion of a ditch supporting a county road;

Subd. 7. Shoulder means the unpaved gravel strip between the traveled portion of a paved county road and the ditch, but does not include any portion of a ditch supporting a county road;

Subd. 8. Special vehicle means any all-terrain vehicle, golf cart, or utility-task vehicle described under this ordinance;

Subd. 9. Utility-task vehicle (UTV) has the meaning given in Minnesota Statute § 169.045, subd. 1(3).

Section 2. Requirement of Special Vehicle Permit.

Subd. 1. This ordinance applies on all county roads within the County of Houston, including those within the limits of any city. Permits shall be required to operate a special vehicle on county roads. Applications shall be made in a form supplied by the County and shall require evidence of insurance complying with the provisions of Minnesota Statute § 65B.48. The County Sheriff is responsible for reviewing applications and issuing permits.

Subd. 2. Permits shall remain valid for three calendar years (January 1 through December 31),

unless revoked according to Section 6 of this Ordinance. Permits may be renewed.

Subd. 3. Special vehicle permits from other jurisdictions will be recognized in the County. Recipients of permits from other jurisdictions may file a copy of the permit with the County or provide proof of permit from another jurisdiction within fourteen (14) days of being stopped for not having a County special vehicle permit. Any permit provided must have been valid when the special vehicle was used in the County.

Section 3. Permitted Operation of Special Vehicles.

Subd. 1. Special vehicles may, by permit, be operated on the right-hand shoulder, where available, or on the extreme right-hand side of the traveled portion, where no shoulder exists, of county roads in the County. No person shall operate a special vehicle on county roads at speeds greater than the posted or statutory speed limit for the county road.

Subd. 2. Golf carts may, by permit, be operated only on county roads in the County with a speed limit of 45 miles per hour or less. Golf carts may not be operated on any portion of county roads in the County with a speed limit of more than 45 miles per hour, except on County Road 6 between Town Hall Road and North Pine Creek Road, La Crescent, MN. Golf carts operated under this ordinance must properly display the slow-moving-vehicle emblem described in Minnesota Statute § 169.522.

Subd. 3. Every special vehicle operator has all the rights and duties applicable to the driver of any other vehicle under the provisions of Minnesota Statutes chapter 169, unless those provisions cannot reasonably be applied to special vehicles. The operation of special vehicles shall comply with Minnesota Statutes § 84.92 through § 84.928, and § 169.045, as well as any other Federal, State, or local law, rule, or regulation.

Section 4. Restrictions. No person shall operate a special vehicle under this ordinance:

Subd. 1. Without a valid driver's license;

Subd. 2. Without valid insurance meeting the standards of Minnesota Statute § 65B.48;

Subd. 3. Except between sunrise and sunset, unless the special vehicle is equipped with original headlights, taillights, and rear-facing brake light equipment;

Subd. 4. In inclement weather, when visibility is impaired by weather, smoke, fog, or other conditions, or at any time when there is insufficient visibility to clearly see persons and vehicles on the roadway at a distance of 500 feet;

Subd. 5. Without a rear-view mirror as described in Minnesota Statutes § 169.70.

Section 5. Minors.

No minor under the age of 18 may operate a special vehicle under this ordinance without possessing a valid driver's license and completing a Department of Natural Resources ATV safety course. Any minor special-vehicle operator or passenger traveling on a county road shall wear a properly fitted helmet approved by the Commissioner of Public Safety.

Section 6. Revocation or Denial.

A permit or application under this Ordinance may be revoked or denied by the County if the special vehicle is not safe to legally operate or has not been safely or legally operated within the County. A permit or application may also be revoked or denied if the operator cannot safely operate the special vehicle.

Section 7. Penalty.

A violation of this Ordinance is a petty misdemeanor, subject to a penalty not exceeding \$300.00.

Section 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after July 22, 2025.



Chairperson, Houston County
Board of Commissioners

Attest: 
County Administrator