MEDIUM SPEED VEHICLES

Notice #08-21 Vehicle Title and Registration Notice September 2008

Highlights

- *Medium speed vehicles may be titled and registered in Tennessee*
- *"Medium speed" vehicle defined*
- *Proper safety equipment is required*
- *Special laws govern the use of medium speed vehicles on Tennessee's roads*

References:

T.C.A. § 55-1-103
T.C.A. § 55-1-123
T.C.A. § 55-1-124
T.C.A. § 55-4-111
T.C.A. § 55-8-101
T.C.A. § 55-8-191
T.C.A. § 55-50-102
49 CFR 571

INTRODUCTION

This notice is intended to provide county clerks and the general public with information concerning the titling and registering of medium speed vehicles.

Medium speed vehicles that meet certain statutory requirements may be titled and registered in Tennessee for use on roads with a speed limit of forty miles per hour (40 mph) or less. Generally, golf carts are excluded, unless they are specifically designed and manufactured for on road use or have been modified to meet all of the statutory requirements and safety standards outlined in this notice. Page two of this notice discusses golf carts in more detail.

DISCUSSION

Tenn. Code Ann. § § 55-1-103, 55-4-111, 55-8-101, 55-8-191, and 55-50-102 provide that medium speed vehicles may be titled and registered in Tennessee if they meet the requirements outlined in the law. A medium speed vehicle is defined in Tennessee Code Ann. § 55-1-124, as follows:

> "Medium speed vehicle" means any four-wheeled electric or gasoline-powered vehicle, excluding golf carts, whose top speed is greater than thirty miles per hour (30 mph), but not greater than thirty-five miles per hour (35 mph), including neighborhood electric vehicles. Medium speed vehicles must comply with the standards in 49 CFR 571.500.

The standard contained in 49 CFR 571.500 (Code of Federal Regulations) requires medium speed vehicles to have basic safety equipment, including head lamps, stop lamps, front and rear turn signal lamps, tail lamps, reflectors (one red on each side near the rear and one red on the back), parking brake, one exterior mirror mounted on the driver's side of the vehicle and one additional mirror on the passenger side or an interior mirror, a windshield meeting the standards outlined in 49 CFR 571.205, seat belts (type 1 or 2) located at each designated seating position, and a vehicle identification number (VIN) that conforms to provisions outlined in 49 CFR 565. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that medium speed vehicles operated on the public streets, roads, and highways are equipped with the minimum motor vehicle equipment appropriate for motor vehicle safety.

Important Information:

The laws regarding the operation of medium speed vehicles on Tennessee's roads are contained in Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-8-191. Medium speed vehicles can only be operated on streets where the posted speed limit is forty miles per hour (40 mph) or less. A medium speed vehicle is permitted to cross streets that exceed this forty mile per hour limit.

Owners and operators of medium speed vehicles, including modified golf carts, are subject to the requirements outlined in Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-8-191 regarding the proper operation of these vehicles on Tennessee's roads and must have a Class D driver license in their possession when operating the vehicle.

In the interest of safety, local county government entities or the Tennessee Department of Transportation may prohibit the operation of medium speed vehicles on any road in its jurisdiction.

- *A medium speed affidavit form is required when there is no MSO indicating the vehicle is a medium speed vehicle*

To register a medium speed vehicle, designed and manufactured for on road use, applicants should provide to their local county clerk's office a copy of the vehicle's MSO (manufacturer's statement of origin), as proof that the vehicle meets all statutory requirements and safety standards, along with the traditional documentation required for vehicle registration. Applicants must submit the medium speed affidavit form (RV-F1319801) with their registration application when there is no MSO indicating the vehicle is a medium speed vehicle. The medium speed affidavit form is available on our Web site, www.Tennessee.gov/revenue.

Golf Carts

- *Unmodified golf carts may not be registered and titled in Tennessee*

Traditional golf carts, as defined by Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-1-123, may not be titled and registered for on road use, unless modified to meet all of the low or medium speed vehicle requirements in Tennessee law and the federal safety standards contained in 49 CFR 571.500. Traditional golf carts are defined in Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-1-123 as follows:

> "Golf cart means a motor vehicle that is designed and manufactured for operation on a golf course for sporting or recreational purposes and that is not capable of exceeding speeds of twenty miles per hour (20 mph)."

A golf cart that is designed and manufactured for on road use, or is modified to meet all of the low or medium speed vehicle requirements and federal safety standards does not meet the definition of a traditional golf cart, as outlined in Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-1-123. Since this vehicle is not a golf cart as defined under Tennessee law, the vehicle may be registered as a low or medium speed vehicle if all requirements are met to be a low or medium speed vehicle.

- *Golf carts can be modified to meet the strict specifications of medium speed vehicles, allowing them to be titled and registered*

Individuals modifying a traditional golf cart to meet medium speed vehicle requirements must submit a medium speed affidavit form (RV-F1319801) that certifies the vehicle has been sufficiently modified to meet all medium speed vehicle requirements. The affidavit must be submitted with the registration application as a condition of registration. Clerks are authorized to title and register these vehicles as medium speed vehicles if all documentation requirements are met.

Additional Information:

- *Assistance is available from Revenue if you have questions*

For more information regarding vehicle registration in Tennessee, please call our vehicle services call center at 888/871-3171 or 615/741-3101. Assistance for county clerks is available by contacting Revenue's county clerk support staff - Billy Trout (615/741-4177), Kathy Duncan (615/532-6908), or Belinda Boddie (615/253-4073). More information is available on our Web site, www.Tennessee.gov/revenue.

References:

T.C.A. § 55-1-103
T.C.A. § 55-1-123
T.C.A. § 55-1-124
T.C.A. § 55-4-111
T.C.A. § 55-8-101
T.C.A. § 55-8-191
T.C.A. § 55-50-102
49 CFR 571

The information provided here is current as of the date of publication but may change as a result of new statutes, regulations, or court decisions. While this notice is intended to be comprehensive, events and situations unanticipated by this notice may occur. In such cases, you should contact the department for further guidance.