

12-7-9

OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLES - DEFINITIONS

As used in this section:

- A. “board” means the off-highway motor vehicle advisory board;
- B. “department” means the Department of Game and Fish;
- C. “division” means the motor vehicle division of the Taxation and Revenue Department;
- D. “fund” means the trail safety fund;
- E. “off-highway motor vehicle” means a motor vehicle designed by the manufacturer for operation exclusively off the highway or road and includes:
 - (1) “all-terrain vehicle,” which means a motor vehicle fifty inches or less in width, having an unladen dry weight of one thousand pounds or less, traveling on three or more low-pressure tires and having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebar-type steering control;
 - “off-highway motorcycle,” which means a motor vehicle traveling on not more than two tires and having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and that has handlebar-type steering control; or
 - (2) “snowmobile,” which means a motor vehicle designed to travel on snow or ice and steered and supported in whole or in part by skis, belts, cleats, runners or low-pressure tires;
 - (3) “recreational off-highway vehicle,” which means a motor vehicle designed for travel on four or more non-highway tires, for recreational use by one or more persons and having:
 - (a) a steering wheel for steering control;
 - (b) non-straddle seating;
 - (c) maximum speed capability greater than 35 miles per hour;
 - (d) gross vehicle weight rating no greater than 1,750 pounds;
 - (e) less than 80 inches in overall width, exclusive of accessories;
 - (f) engine displacement of less than 1,000 cubic centimeters;
 - and
 - (g) identification by means of a 17-character vehicle identification number; or
 - (4) by rule of the department, any other vehicles that may enter the market that fit the general profile of vehicles operated off-highway for recreational purposes;
- F. “staging area” means a parking lot, trailhead or other location to or from which an off-highway motor vehicle is transported so that it may be placed into operation or removed from operation; and

- G. “unpaved public roadway” means a dirt graveled street or road that is constructed, signed and maintained for regular passenger-car use by the general public.

12-7-9.1 **OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLES—REGISTRATION; PLATE REQUIREMENT**

A. Unless exempted from the provisions of this section, a person shall not operate an off-highway motor vehicle unless the off-highway motor vehicle has been registered in accordance with Chapter 66, Article 3 NMSA 1978. The owner shall affix the validating sticker as provided in Chapter 66, Article 3 NMSA 1978. (66-3-1003 NMSA 1978)

12-7-9.2 **OPERATION OF OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLES ON STREETS OR HIGHWAYS -- PROHIBITED AREAS.**

A. No person shall operate an off-highway motor vehicle on any limited access street at any time or any paved street or highway except as provided in Subsection B, C, D or E of this section.

B. Off-highway motor vehicles may cross streets or highways, except limited access highways or freeways, if the crossings are made after coming to a complete stop prior to entering the street. Off-highway motor vehicles shall yield the right of way to oncoming traffic and shall begin a crossing only when it can be executed safely and then crossing in the most direct manner, as close to a perpendicular angle as possible.

C. If authorized by ordinance or resolution of a local authority or the State Transportation Commission, a recreational off-highway vehicle or an all-terrain vehicle may be operated on a paved street or highway owned and controlled by the authorizing authority if:

(1) the vehicle has one or more headlights and one or more taillights that comply with the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Act;

(2) the vehicle has brakes, mirrors and mufflers;

(3) the operator has valid driver’s licenses or permits as required under the Motor Vehicle Code and off-highway motor vehicle safety permits as required under the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Act;

(4) the operator is insured in compliance with the provisions of the Mandatory Financial Responsibility Act; and

(5) the operator of the vehicle is using eye protection that comply with the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Act; and

(6) if the operator is under eighteen years of age, the operator is wearing a safety helmet that complies with the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Act.

D. Except for sections of the Motor Vehicle Code that are in conflict with the licensing and equipment requirements of the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Act, any operator using an off-highway motor vehicle on a paved street or highway shall be subject to the requirements and penalties for operators of moving or parked vehicles under the Motor Vehicle Code.

E. By ordinance or resolution, a local authority or the State Transportation Commission may establish separate speed limits and operating restrictions for off-highway vehicles where they are authorized to operate on paved streets or highways pursuant to Subsection C of this section.

F. A person shall not operate an off-highway motor vehicle on state game commission-owned, -controlled or -administered land except as specifically allowed pursuant to Chapter 17, Article 6 NMSA 1978.

G. A person shall not operate an off-highway motor vehicle on land owned, controlled or administered by the state parks division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, pursuant to Chapter 16, Article 2 NMSA 1978, except in areas designated by and permitted by rules adopted by the secretary of Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources.

H. Unless authorized, a person shall not:

(1) remove, deface or destroy any official sign installed by a state, federal, local or private land management agency; or

(2) install any off-highway motor vehicle-related sign. (66-3-1011 NMSA)

12-7-9.3 DRIVING OF OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLES ADJACENT TO STREETS.

A. Off-highway motor vehicles issued a validating sticker or nonresident permit may be driven adjacent to a street, yielding to all vehicles entering or exiting the street, in a manner so as not to interfere with traffic upon the street, only for the purpose of gaining access to, or returning from areas designed for the operation of off-highway motor vehicles, by the shortest route possible and when no other route is available or when the area adjacent to a street is being used as a staging area. Such use must occur between the street and fencing that separates the street from private or public lands.

B. When snow conditions permit, an off-highway motor vehicle may be operated on the right-hand side of a street, parallel, but not closer than ten feet, to the inside of the plow bank. (66-3-1012 NMSA 1978)

12-7-9.4 **OPERATION OF OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLES ON PRIVATE LANDS.** It is unlawful to operate an off-highway motor vehicle on private lands except with the express permission of the owner of the lands. (66-3-1013 NMSA 1978)

12-7-9.5.1.1 **ACCIDENTS AND ACCIDENT REPORTS.** The driver of an off-highway motor vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injuries to, or the death of, any person, or resulting in damage to public or private property to the extent of five hundred dollars (\$500) or more, shall immediately notify a law enforcement agency of the accident and the facts relating to the accident. If the driver is under the age of eighteen, the driver's parent or legal guardian shall immediately notify a law enforcement agency of the accident and the facts relating to the accident. (66-3-1014 NMSA)

12-7-9.6 **ENFORCEMENT OF OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLE REGULATIONS.** A wildlife conservation officer, state police officer or peace officer of this state or any of its political subdivisions, upon displaying his badge of office, has the authority to enforce the provisions of Sections 12-7-9.1 through 12-7-9.5 of this ordinance and may require the operator of any off-highway motor vehicle to produce the certificate of registration or nonresident permit, proof of successful completion of an off-highway motor vehicle training course conducted by an off-highway safety training organization approved and certified by the department, when required by Section 12-7-9.8, and the personal identification of the operator, and may issue citations for violations of the provisions of Sections 12-7-9.1 through 12-7-9.9 of this ordinance. (66-3-1015 NMSA 1978)

12-7-9.7 **EXEMPTIONS**

The provisions of the this Section shall not apply to persons who operate off-highway motor vehicles on privately held lands or to off-highway motor vehicles that are:

- A. owned and operated by an agency or department of the United States, this state or a political subdivision of this state;
- B. operated exclusively on lands privately held; provided that the appropriate tax or fee has been paid in lieu of the motor vehicle registration fees;
- C. owned by nonresidents and used in this state only for organized and endorsed competition purposes; provided that the use is not on a rental basis;
- D. brought into this state by manufacturers or distributors for wholesale purposes and not used for demonstrations;
- E. in the possession of dealers as stock-in-trade and not used for demonstration purposes;

F. farm tractors, as defined in Section 66-1-4.6 NMSA 1978, special mobile equipment, as defined in Section 66-1-4.16 NMSA 1978, or off-highway motor vehicles being used for agricultural operations; or

G. used exclusively on private closed courses, whether owned by the rider or another person; provided that, if applicable, the excise tax and registration fees have been paid and are current. (66-3-1005 NMSA 1978)

12-7-9.8 **OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY PERMIT;
REQUIREMENTS, ISSUANCE.**

A person under the age of eighteen shall be required to successfully complete an off-highway motor vehicle safety training course for which the person shall have parental permission. The course shall be conducted by an off-highway motor vehicle safety training organization that is approved and certified by the department. Upon successful completion of the course, the person shall receive an off-highway motor vehicle safety permit issued by the organization. (66-3-1010.2 NMSA 1978)

12-7-9.9 **OPERATION AND EQUIPMENT – SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

A. A person shall not operate an off-highway motor vehicle:

(1) in a careless, reckless or negligent manner so as to endanger the person or property of another;

(2) while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs as provided by Section 66-8-102 NMSA 1978;

(3) while in pursuit of and with intent to hunt or take a species of animal or bird protected by law unless otherwise authorized by the state game commission;

(4) in pursuit of or harassment of livestock in any manner that negatively affects the livestock's condition;

(5) on or within an earthen tank or other structure meant to water livestock or wildlife, unless the off-highway motor vehicle is on a route designated by the landowner or land management agency as an off-highway motor vehicle route;

(6) in a manner that has a direct negative effect on or interferes with persons engaged in agricultural practices;

(7) in excess of ten miles per hour within two hundred feet of a business, animal shelter, horseback rider, bicyclist, pedestrian or occupied dwelling, unless the person operates the vehicle on a closed course or track or a public roadway;

(8) unless in possession of the person's registration certificate or nonresident permit;

(9) unless the vehicle is equipped with a spark arrester approved by the United States forest service; provided that a snowmobile is exempt from this provision;

(10) when conditions such as darkness limit visibility to five hundred feet or less, unless the vehicle is equipped with:

(a) one or more headlights of sufficient candlepower to light objects at a distance of one hundred fifty feet; and

(b) at least one taillight of sufficient intensity to exhibit a red or amber light at a distance of two hundred feet under normal atmospheric conditions; or

(11) that produces noise that exceeds ninety-six decibels when measured using test procedures established by the society of automotive engineers pursuant to standard J-1287; or

(12) where off-highway motor vehicle traffic is prohibited under local, state or federal rules or regulations.

B. A person under the age of eighteen shall not operate an off-highway motor vehicle:

(1) or ride upon an off-highway motor vehicle without wearing eye protection and a safety helmet that is securely fastened in a normal manner as headgear and that meets the standards established by the department ;

(2) without an off-highway motor vehicle safety permit; or

(3) while carrying a passenger.

C. A person under the age of eighteen but at least ten years of age shall not operate an off-highway motor vehicle unless the person is visually supervised at all times by a parent, legal guardian or a person over the age of eighteen who has a valid driver's license. This subsection shall not apply to a person who is at least:

(1) thirteen years of age and has a valid motorcycle license and off-highway motor vehicle safety permit; or

(2) fifteen years of age and has a valid driver's license, instructional permit or provisional license and off-highway motor vehicle safety permit.

D. A person under the age of ten shall not operate an off-highway motor vehicle unless:

(1) the all-terrain vehicle or recreational off-highway vehicle is an age-appropriate size-fit vehicle established by rule of the department ; and

(2) the person is visually supervised at all times by a parent, legal guardian or instructor of a safety training course certified by the department .

E. An off-highway motor vehicle may not be sold or offered for sale if the vehicle produces noise that exceeds ninety-six decibels when measured using test procedures

established by the society of automotive engineers pursuant to standard J-1287. This subsection shall not apply to an off-highway motor vehicle that is sold or offered for sale only for organized competition. (66-3-1010.3 NMSA 1978)