

Many people may consider using a golf cart for short trips in and about town as an attractive alternative to driving the family car. However, there are certain things that drivers in Atlantic Beach need to be aware of before they decide to use this mode of transportation.

Listed below you will find answers to frequently asked questions about golf carts on Atlantic Beach roads. The safety of residents and visitors on our roadways is always our primary concern; so keep in mind that during the summer months, the traffic in Atlantic Beach explodes as visitors flock to our beaches. This means that anyone driving an alternate form of transportation is placing him/herself and any passengers on busy thoroughfares alongside drivers of full-sized vehicle who may or may not be familiar with our streets. **Extra caution MUST be used by all!**

1. Can I drive a golf cart on public roads in Atlantic Beach?

No. "Golf Carts" are illegal on most public roads in North Carolina. However, you can drive a "Low-Speed Vehicle".

2. What is the difference between a "Golf Cart" and a "Low-Speed Vehicle"?

A 'golf cart' is a vehicle that has been designed to be used in the recreational setting of a golf course and whose speed cannot exceed 20 mph; whereas a 'low-speed vehicle' is a four-wheeled electric vehicle designed for on-road use with specific safety features and a speed limit that ranges between 20 and 25 mph.

3. Low-Speed Vehicles look very much like golf carts. How can I tell the difference?

The low-speed vehicle must be equipped with headlamps, stop lamps, turn signal lamps, tail lamps, reflex reflectors, parking brakes, rearview mirrors, windshields, windshield wipers, speedometer, seat belts and a vehicle identification number.

4. So, can I just take my golf cart to the dealer and have him add all of the safety features and then drive my vehicle as a 'low-speed vehicle'?

No. 'Low-speed vehicles' are not just golf carts with extra features; they are imprinted by the manufacturer with a 17-digit vehicle information number, just like your family car.

5. Does my low-speed vehicle need a license plate?

Yes. Just like your family car, a low-speed vehicle must be registered and insured in accordance with G.S. 20-50 and G.S. 20-309.

6. Can my 13-year old grandson drive my low-speed vehicle?

No. Again, just like your family car, a low-speed vehicle must be operated by a licensed driver.

7. I finally have a street-legal low- speed vehicle. Can I drive on any road I want?

No. Low-speed vehicles may be operated only on streets and highways where the posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less. They may [however] cross a road or street at an intersection with a posted speed higher than 35 mph.

8. Is there anything else I need to know about driving a low-speed vehicle?

Yes. Be aware that the Department of Transportation may prohibit the operation of low-speed vehicles on any road or highway if it determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

9. Can I park my low-speed vehicle on the sidewalk like I park my bike?

No. Low-speed vehicles must be parked in marked and legal parking spaces, just like when you park your family car.

If you choose to use a low-speed vehicle on the public roads in Atlantic Beach, please make sure that you are following all of the applicable rules and regulations regarding these vehicles and that you and your passengers use extra caution to avoid any possible unpleasant or tragic consequences. We want the time you spend in our town to be a safe and happy time.