

Multipurpose vehicles can begin using public roads January 1

Reprinted from WYDOT Article, December 3, 2007

A new law taking effect Jan.1 will make it legal to drive multipurpose vehicles on any Wyoming road except interstate highways, provided the vehicles meet size and safety requirements and are insured and the drivers meet license requirements.

The law passed by the 2007 Legislature defines a multipurpose vehicle as any motorized vehicle that has at least four wheels in contact with the ground, weighs 300 to 3,000 pounds, is manufactured with a permanent driver seat mounted at least 24 inches above the ground and has a vehicle identification number.

Vehicles that meet that definition include off-road recreational vehicles, some electric-powered vehicles, golf carts and small utility vehicles with model names such as Gator, Mule and Rhino. The law does not apply to tracked vehicles, go-carts, scooters, three-wheelers or golf carts being used as transport directly to or from a golf course or for special events or circumstances authorized by a city, town or county.

The registration of off-road recreational vehicles already registered as motorcycles will be changed to the multipurpose vehicle category when their current registration expires, and it will no longer be legal to ride them on interstate highways.

Any multipurpose vehicle driven on public roads must be titled, registered, licensed and insured.

“Because they are defined as a vehicle similar to a car or truck, they are required to have license plates on them,” said Bob Stauffacher, compliance and investigations manager for the Wyoming Department of Transportation. “There will be a unique license plate that will be required on the multipurpose vehicles.”

To get those plates, owners will have to bring a title and proof of insurance to their county treasurer’s office.

“Most insurance companies will require a person to obtain an automobile insurance policy similar to what you would get for your car or truck, and you would then get a card to carry with you,” said Lacey Bruckner, WYDOT compliance investigator. “There are some insurance policies that cover these under homeowners’ policies or agriculture policies, and in that case, they may cover the vehicle under that policy to be operated on a road or highway.”

Once properly licensed and insured, anyone with a valid driver license of any class can drive a multipurpose vehicle on any public road except interstate highways.

If the vehicle is unable to maintain the posted speed limit for the road it is on, the driver must keep to the extreme right edge of the road and the vehicle must display a slow-moving vehicle emblem or a reflectorized flag on a pole. Vehicles designed to operate at speeds below 25 mph must be equipped with a slow-moving vehicle emblem.

Vehicles more than 50 inches wide are required to have two headlights, two taillights, two brake lights and two rear-mounted reflectors. Narrower vehicles must have one of each.

“All of the vehicles, regardless of their width, will be required to have a muffler, a horn, rearview mirrors, a parking brake and, if the vehicle has a windshield and an enclosed cab, they’ll be required to have windshield wipers,” Bruckner said.

A checklist of the safety equipment required to legally drive a multipurpose vehicle on public roads is available at county clerk offices and ports of entry.