

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001**

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**HOUSE BILL 1052  
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/24/01**

Short Title: Low-Speed Vehicles Defined.

(Public)

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Sponsors:

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Referred to:

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April 10, 2001

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT DEFINING AND REGULATING LOW-SPEED VEHICLES AND OTHERS. .

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 20-4.01 reads as rewritten:

"§ 20-4.01. **Definitions.**

Unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply throughout this Chapter to the defined words and phrases and their cognates:

...

(12a) Golf Cart. – A vehicle designed and manufactured for operation on a golf course for sporting or recreational purposes and that is not capable of exceeding speeds of 20 miles per hour.

~~(12a)~~(12b) Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR). – The value specified by the manufacturer as the maximum loaded weight of a vehicle. The GVWR of a combination vehicle is the GVWR of the power unit plus the GVWR of the towed unit or units. When a vehicle is determined by an enforcement officer to be structurally altered from the manufacturer's original design, the license weight or the total weight of the vehicle or combination of vehicles may be deemed as the GVWR for the purpose of enforcing this Chapter.

~~(12b)~~(12c) Hazardous Materials. – Materials designated as hazardous by the United States Secretary of Transportation under 49 U.S.C. § 1803."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 20-4.01(27) reads as rewritten:

"(27) Passenger Vehicles. –

- a. Excursion passenger vehicles. – Vehicles transporting persons on sight-seeing or travel tours.
- b. For hire passenger vehicles. – Vehicles transporting persons for compensation. This classification shall not include vehicles

1 operated as ambulances; vehicles operated by the owner where  
2 the costs of operation are shared by the passengers; vehicles  
3 operated pursuant to a ridesharing arrangement as defined in  
4 G.S. 136-44.21; vehicles transporting students for the public  
5 school system under contract with the State Board of Education  
6 or vehicles leased to the United States of America or any of its  
7 agencies on a nonprofit basis; or vehicles used for human  
8 service or volunteer transportation.

9 c. Common carriers of passengers. – Vehicles operated under a  
10 certificate of authority issued by the Utilities Commission for  
11 operation on the highways of this State between fixed termini or  
12 over a regular route for the transportation of persons for  
13 compensation.

14 c1. Child care vehicles. – Vehicles under the direction and control  
15 of a child care facility, as defined in G.S. 110-86(3), and driven  
16 by an owner, employee, or agent of the child care facility for  
17 the primary purpose of transporting children to and from the  
18 child care facility, or to and from a place for participation in an  
19 event or activity in connection with the child care facility.

20 d. Motorcycles. – Vehicles having a saddle for the use of the rider  
21 and designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact  
22 with the ground, including motor scooters and motor-driven  
23 bicycles, but excluding tractors and utility vehicles equipped  
24 with an additional form of device designed to transport  
25 property, three-wheeled vehicles while being used by  
26 law-enforcement agencies and mopeds as defined in subdivision  
27 d1 of this subsection.

28 d1. Moped. – Defined in G.S. 105-164.3.

29 d2. Motor home or house car. – A vehicular unit, designed to  
30 provide temporary living quarters, built into as an integral part,  
31 or permanently attached to, a self-propelled motor vehicle  
32 chassis or van. The vehicle must provide at least four of the  
33 following facilities: cooking, refrigeration or icebox,  
34 self-contained toilet, heating or air conditioning, a portable  
35 water supply system including a faucet and sink, separate  
36 110-125 volt electrical power supply, or an LP gas supply.

37 d3. School activity bus. – A vehicle, generally painted a different  
38 color from a school bus, whose primary purpose is to transport  
39 school students and others to or from a place for participation in  
40 an event other than regular classroom work. The term includes a  
41 public, private, or parochial vehicle that meets this description.

- 1 d4. School bus. – A vehicle whose primary purpose is to transport  
2 school students over an established route to and from school for  
3 the regularly scheduled school day, that is equipped with  
4 alternately flashing red lights on the front and rear and a  
5 mechanical stop signal, and that bears the words "School Bus"  
6 on the front and rear in letters at least 8 inches in height. The  
7 term includes a public, private, or parochial vehicle that meets  
8 this description.
- 9 e. U-drive-it passenger vehicles. – Passenger vehicles included in  
10 the definition of U-drive-it vehicles set forth in this section.
- 11 f. Ambulances. – Vehicles equipped for transporting wounded,  
12 injured, or sick persons.
- 13 g. Private passenger vehicles. – All other passenger vehicles not  
14 included in the above definitions.
- 15 h. Low-speed vehicle. – Any four-wheeled electric vehicle whose  
16 top speed is greater than 20 miles per hour but less than 25  
17 miles per hour. Low-speed vehicles must comply with the  
18 safety standards in 40 C.F.R. 571.500."

19 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 20-4.01 reads as rewritten:

20 **"§ 20-4.01. Definitions.**

21 Unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply throughout  
22 this Chapter to the defined words and phrases and their cognates:

23 ...

24 (48c) Utility Vehicle. – Vehicle designed and manufactured for general  
25 maintenance, security, recreational, and landscaping purposes, but  
26 does not include vehicles designed or used primarily for the  
27 transportation of persons or property on a street or highway.

28 ..."

29 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 20-87 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

30 "(12) Electric vehicles; registration fees. – The license and registration fees  
31 for an electric vehicle or low-speed vehicle are the same as those  
32 prescribed in this section for vehicles which are not electrically  
33 powered."

34 **SECTION 5.** Chapter 20 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a  
35 new section to read:

36 **"§ 20-121.1 Operation of a low-speed vehicle on certain roadways.**

37 The operation of a low-speed vehicle, as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(27)h. is authorized  
38 with the following restrictions:

- 39 (1) A low-speed vehicle may be operated only on streets and highways  
40 where the posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less. This does not  
41 prohibit a low-speed vehicle from crossing a road or street at an

- 1                   intersection where the road or street being crossed has a posted speed  
2                   limit of more than 35 miles per hour.
- 3           (2)   A low-speed vehicle shall be equipped with headlamps, stop lamps,  
4                   turn signal lamps, tail lamps, reflex reflectors, parking brakes,  
5                   rearview mirrors, windshields, windshield wipers, speedometer, seat  
6                   belts, and a vehicle identification number.
- 7           (3)   A low-speed vehicle shall be registered and insured in accordance with  
8                   G.S. 20-50 and G.S. 20-309.
- 9           (4)   The Department of Transportation may prohibit the operation of low-  
10                   speed vehicles on any road or highway if it determines that the  
11                   prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety."
- 12           **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2001.