



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

### **Frequently Asked Questions About Galveston Island's Newly Passed Golf Cart Ordinance**

Galveston, Texas

March 17, 2010

**Question: When does the newly adopted golf cart ordinance go into effect?**

Ordinance 10-028 regulating the use of golf carts on Galveston Island was passed by the City Council on March 11<sup>th</sup>, will be published by the City Secretary on March 21<sup>st</sup>, and go into effect on Wednesday, March 31, 2010. The Galveston Police Department will exercise a grace period until May 1, 2010, to allow cart owners to come into compliance with the new regulations. In the interim, officers will be stopping golf cart drivers to educate them about the regulations and required registration.

**Question: Who is legally allowed to drive a golf cart on Galveston Island?**

Only licensed drivers may drive a golf cart on Galveston Island.

**Question: What is the boundary line distinguishing the western and eastern portions of the city?**

To clarify, the City's east end golf cart rules apply to all areas of the Island 103<sup>rd</sup> Street and east, inclusive of 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, whereas the west end golf cart rules apply to all areas west of 103<sup>rd</sup> Street.

**Question: Where can I drive my golf cart?**

Galveston's ordinance distinguishes golf cart operation in eastern and western portions of the City. Golf carts that are registered for operation 103<sup>rd</sup> Street and east may be driven in accordance with the ordinance anywhere permitted on Galveston Island, but golf carts that are registered for operation west of 103<sup>rd</sup> Street may **not** be driven east of 103<sup>rd</sup> Street. Usage is restricted for west end cart drivers due to safety features required to operate a golf cart in the eastern portion of the Island.

Under the ordinance, golf carts can be operated on public roadways within the City of Galveston that:

- a) Have a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less.
- b) Have no more than two lanes of vehicular traffic per direction.
- c) Are not designated as part of either the State or Federal highway system.

Golf carts are **not** permitted on public streets as follows:

- a) Roadways where the posted speed limit exceeds 35 miles per hour.
- b) Avenue "O" between 53<sup>rd</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets and Avenue "P", between 19<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Streets.
- c) Roadways which are designated as part of the State highway system, including the "Pelican Island Causeway".

Golf carts can not be driven on sidewalks and are prohibited from pulling trailers, boats, jet skis, other objects or people on public streets and the right of way. Golf carts can only be operated on beaches that allow vehicular access, except for those with a disability as described below.

Golf carts are limited to the seating capacity as designed by the manufacturer. All drivers and passengers must be seated at all times during operation of a golf cart. All occupants under the age of seven must be restrained by either an adult or by a seatbelt. If golf cart is operated 103<sup>rd</sup> Street and east, all drivers and passengers must use a seatbelt.

**Question: Why can't I drive my golf cart on non-vehicular beaches?**

Vehicular access on Galveston Island beaches is regulated through the Texas Open Beaches Act and Galveston's Beach Access Plan. Golf carts are defined by the Texas Transportation Code as motor vehicles and therefore can only operate on beaches that allow motor vehicles. Operating a golf cart on pedestrian, non-vehicular beaches, is limited to handicapped individuals with clearly displayed placards.

To obtain a handicapped placard for your golf cart, please contact the Galveston County Tax Office (409) 766-2284. The County has offices located on the Island as well as on the mainland. Please call the County for a list of required documentation and office hours.

**Question: Where can I apply for my golf cart registration permit and decal?**

Golf cart registration permits may be obtained from the Galveston Police Department. Police Department headquarters is located at 601 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Owners can apply for golf cart permits between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The golf cart registration application will soon be available online at the Galveston Police Department's website, [www.galvestonpd.com](http://www.galvestonpd.com). Additionally, applications can be obtained from any Galveston police officer.

Golf cart owners will need to provide the following information to register their carts:

- 1) Name and address of the Applicant owner.
- 2) Location where the vehicle is regularly stored overnight.
- 3) Model, make, name and golf cart identification number.
- 4) Current driver's license.
- 5) Proof of financial responsibility.

Each registered golf cart will be issued a registration permit decal that must be clearly displayed on the cart's right front panel (driver's side). The registration permit is good for one year from the date of registration, or such time as revoked, or the golf cart is transferred to a new owner. Carts registered 103<sup>rd</sup> Street and east will be issued a green decal; carts registered west of 103<sup>rd</sup> Street will be issued a red decal.

**Question: How much does the registration cost?**

The cost of an annual registration permit is \$25.00.

**Question: What is the fine if I'm caught disregarding the golf cart ordinance?**

Pursuant to state law, drivers found in violation of the City's golf cart ordinance are subject to a misdemeanor offense punishable as follows:

- 1) Violations of Section 34-203 shall be punishable by a fine not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00). Each day a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.
- 2) Violations of Sections 34-207(e) or 34-207(f) shall be punishable by a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars (\$200.00).

**Question: What safety features does my golf cart needed to be equipped with?**

All golf carts must be equipped with the following minimum safety equipment to be eligible for a registration permit:

- 1) Operational headlamps
- 2) Operational tail lamps
- 3) Side reflectors
- 4) Operational parking brake
- 5) Rearview mirror(s)
- 6) Slow moving vehicle sign having a reflective surface designed to be clearly visible in daylight or at night from the light of standard headlamps at a distance of at least 500 feet. This sign should be mounted base down on the rear of the cart at a height from three to five feet above the road surface. It must be maintained in a clean reflective condition.

Golf carts registered 103<sup>rd</sup> Street and east are required to install the following additional safety equipment:

- 1) Turn signals
- 2) Horn
- 3) Brake lights
- 4) Seat belts

All golf cart equipment must be installed and maintained in a manner consistent with the standards provided by Texas Transportation Code.

**Question: Is it illegal to drink alcohol while driving my golf cart?**

Yes. The Texas Transportation Code defines a golf cart as a motor vehicle so the open container and driving while intoxicated rules apply and are punishable by law.

**Question: How was the golf cart ordinance developed?**

On December 13, 2009, the Galveston City Council appointed Galvestonians to two ad hoc committees, the East End Golf Cart Committee and the West End Golf Cart Committee. Each committee was asked to research the use of golf carts in master planned communities as well as on other public streets. After meeting over the course of several weeks the committees brought their recommendations to Council in the form of an ordinance. Throughout the process several city staff members worked with the groups, notably representatives from the police and legal departments.

**Question: Where can I get a copy of the new ordinance regulating golf carts?**

Through approval of this ordinance the Galveston City Council amended Chapter 34 of the city's code. To view the City of Galveston's online charter and code please visit,

[www.cityofgalveston.org](http://www.cityofgalveston.org). Members of the public wishing to view ordinance 10-028 can also request a copy from the City Secretary's Office by calling (409) 797-3510 or they can visit the office, located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of City Hall, 823 Rosenberg, Galveston, TX, during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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