

Moped? Scooter? 'Limited Use?'

Know the Difference as New Rules Take Effect

On July 31, new regulations take effect regarding two- to three-wheeled motorized vehicles which includes a new classification of "limited use" vehicles that require a license plate, title, insurance and inspection.

If you're in the market for a new moped or motorized cycle, make sure you know the details of the engine size and speed of the vehicle you want to buy to determine if it can be registered and operated on Massachusetts roadways. Also, make sure what you buy meets your needs in terms of speed and parking ability.

A moped must have an automatic transmission, an engine capacity that doesn't exceed 50 cc and can not go faster than 30 miles an hour. A moped needs a registration sticker from the Registry of Motor Vehicles to operate on the roads, and can be parked on a sidewalk.

A two- or three-wheeled cycle that goes faster than 40 miles an hour can be registered as a motorcycle. An operator needs a motorcycle license to operate, and the motorcycle must meet federal safety certification for a motorcycle, be titled, insured, inspected and registered with a motorcycle plate.

The new law that takes effect July 31 includes an additional category of two- to three-wheeled vehicles, called "limited use" vehicles. These vehicles

can go faster than 30 mph and reach a top speed of 40 miles an hour. Unlike mopeds, these vehicles need to meet federal safety certification, be titled, inspected, insured and registered with the RMV which now has a distinctive plate for limited use vehicles. An operator of a limited use vehicle must have a driver's license unless it is federally certified as a motorcycle, then a motorcycle license or permit is required.

In most instances plated vehicles cannot be parked on sidewalks. However, municipalities have the authority to set local parking regulations and many communities are considering exempting limited use vehicles from that restriction.

The Registry of Motor Vehicles announced in July that moped operators whose vehicles now meet limited-use requirements will be required to insure, title, register and inspect their vehicles when their current moped registration expires.

As you shop for a new two- or three-wheeled vehicle make sure you know what features and benefits you want from the vehicle, and whether the vehicle's specifications meet the requirements for registration and operation on Massachusetts roads. Working with a knowledgeable dealer who can outline the details for you clearly can help you make the right decision for this important purchase.