

DEFINITIONS

MOTORCYCLE

Any motor vehicle having a seat or saddle for the rider that is designed to travel with no more than three wheels contacting the ground, including any bicycle with a motor or driving wheels attached.



MOTORIZED BICYCLE

A pedal bicycle which has a helper motor, or a non-pedal bicycle which has a motor, with a cylinder capacity not exceeding fifty (50) cubic centimeters, an automatic transmission, and which is capable of a maximum speed of no more than thirty (30) miles per hour (mph).



OPERATION OF MOTORIZED BICYCLES

Under Massachusetts law, mopeds fall into the category of “motorized bicycles”(with or without pedals) and are therefore regulated by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. Individuals must have a valid learner’s permit or driver’s license to operate a motorized bicycle or moped.

Mopeds must have automatic transmissions and cylinder capacities of no more than 50 cubic centimeters. In addition, mopeds must meet all federal motor vehicle safety standards and have maximum speeds of no more than 30 mph. The following limitations apply:

- Individuals may not operate at speeds greater than 25 mph.
- Individuals may not operate on state highways or limited-access roads with signs prohibiting bicycles.
- Individuals may not operate on off-street recreational paths.
- Individuals may use bicycle lanes along roadways.
- Individuals must use the proper hand signals before stopping or turning.
- Individuals and their passengers must wear United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) approved helmets when operating.
- Individuals may not carry passengers while operating on a permit.

MOTORIZED SCOOTER

Any two-wheeled tandem or three-wheeled device, that has handlebars, is designed to be stood or sat upon by the operator, and is powered by an electric or gas powered motor that is capable of propelling the device with or without human propulsion. The definition of a “motorized scooter” shall not include a motorcycle, motorized bicycle, or three-wheeled motorized wheelchair.



OPERATION OF MOTORIZED SCOOTERS

Under Massachusetts law, motorized scooters fall into the category of “motor vehicles” and are therefore regulated by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. Individuals must have a valid learner’s permit or driver’s license to operate a motorized scooter. Any individual who operates a motorized scooter is subject to the motor vehicle laws of Massachusetts. The Registry of Motor Vehicles will not register motorized scooters.

The Registrar of Motor Vehicles has further determined that “mini-motorcycles” and “pocket bikes” are motorized scooters. All motorized scooters must be equipped with operational “stop” and “turn” signals and must meet all federal motor vehicle safety standards. The following limitations apply:

- Individuals may not operate at speeds greater than 20 mph.
- Individuals may not operate on state highways or limited access roadways with signs prohibiting bicycles or scooters.
- Individuals may not operate upon any way after sunset or before sunrise.
- Individuals may operate motorized scooters on public ways.
- Individuals must keep to the right side of the roadway at all times, including when passing a motor vehicle which is moving in the travel lane of the way.
- Individuals must use the proper electronic and hand signals before stopping or turning.
- Individuals must wear United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) approved helmets when operating.
- Individuals may not carry passengers while operating a motorized scooter.

Limited Use Vehicle (LUV)

A "limited use vehicle" is any motor vehicle that . . .

- has 2 or more wheels
- has a certificate of origin
- has a 17 character VIN
- has been certified by the manufacturer to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) for that particular class of vehicle (e.g. passenger, motorcycle, truck, etc.), and
- whose speed on a paved level surface can exceed 30 miles per hour but is not capable of exceeding 40 miles per hour.

Note: In most instances the maximum speed of the vehicle will not be on the Certificate of Origin. It will be up to the dealer, insurance agent, and the customer to ensure the vehicle is properly registered.



Two Wheels



Three Wheels

Operating a Limited Use Vehicle

A limited use vehicle must be registered and an appropriate class learner's permit or license is required to operate.

- To be operated on a public way, LUVs must be registered, titled, insured, and inspected. If an electrical motor or batteries solely power the vehicle, no emissions test is required. If, however, the LUV is liquid-fueled, the emissions test is required.
- Limited use vehicles are prohibited from "limited access" and "express state highways," and any portion of other roads where the speed limit exceeds 40 mph.