



Traffic Engineering, Operations & Safety Manual

Chapter 13 Traffic Regulations

Section 3 Low Speed Vehicles

13-3-1 Policy

December 2011

A Low-Speed Vehicle (LSV) is defined in Wis. Stat. S.340.01(27h). Formerly known as “Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs),” LSVs are four-wheeled, motorized vehicles that comply with federal safety standards stated in 49 CFR ss. 571.3(b) and 571.500. LSVs are manufactured with a maximum speed of 25 MPH. Golf carts are not LSVs.

Wisconsin law (ss. 349.26) provides town, village and city governments’ broad discretion to permit LSVs to operate on highways within their territorial boundaries. Municipal ordinances take priority over county ordinances, as well as the default rules explained below. The default rules apply where there are no municipal or county ordinances.

Under new legislation effective October 2010, WisDOT no longer has authority to permit or prohibit LSV use on highways. The law, however, prohibits LSV use on any highway with a speed limit greater than 35MPH, which effectively prohibits LSV use on most of the state highway system.

DEFAULT RULES – NO LOCAL ORDINANCE

Per the Default Rules, LSVs may be used as follows:

- Connect Highways – A person may operate an LSV on a connecting highway only if the speed limit of the connecting highway is 25 MPH or less
- Local Roads – A person may operate an LSV on any highway, other than a connecting highway, that has a speed limit of 35 MPH or less and that is under the maintenance jurisdiction of a municipality or county. Exception apply at intersections:
 - At an intersection of a local (municipal or county) road with a state trunk highway or connecting highway, LSVs may be used only if:
 - 1) The state trunk highway or connecting highway has a speed limit at the intersection of 35 MPH or less; and
 - 2) Traffic at the intersection is controlled by traffic control signals.
 - At intersections of a local (municipal or county) road with expressways, freeways, or controlled-access highways, LSVs may not be used. This means that an expressway, freeway or controlled access highway effectively creates an impassable barrier to LSV travel in the absence of an ordinance. LSVs cannot cross these highways at grade or at grade-separated interchanges.