



Leone Equestrian Law LLC

Updated: Can a Minor Drive a Golf Cart at a Horse Show?

By Leone Equestrian Law | www.EquestrianCounsel.com

Q: We are planning to rent a golf cart during an upcoming horse show in Florida. What are some things we need to keep in mind? Can my 14-year-old daughter drive the cart, even though she doesn't have a driver's license yet?



It's common these days for horse show families to rent a golf cart, but make sure you are aware of the risks ahead of time if this is an option you're considering.

Answer: UPDATE - There is a US Equestrian Federation rule about this very topic! Per rule GR1301.7 of the USEF Rule Book:

“7. Minors who do not have a valid driver's license which allows them to operate a motorized vehicle in the state in which they reside will not be permitted to operate a motorized vehicle of any kind, including, but not limited to, golf carts, motorcycles, scooters, or farm utility vehicles, on the competition grounds of licensed competitions. Minors who have a valid temporary license may operate the above described motorized vehicles as long as they are accompanied by an adult with a valid driver's license. The parent/legal guardian or individual who signs the entry blank as a parent or guardian of a minor operating a motorized vehicle in violation of this rule are solely responsible for any damages, claims, losses or actions resulting from that operation. Violations of this rule will be cause for penalties against those responsible for the child committing the offense. Wheelchairs and other mobility assistance devices for individuals with disabilities are exempt from this rule.”

So, the short answer is, no, your daughter may not operate a golf cart on the show grounds unless she has a valid driver's license. However, she may still be able to drive the cart off-site.

The first thing to know is that each state has its own rules regarding the age requirements for driving a golf cart. As a result, what may be considered an acceptable age in one place could be illegal in another. This is why it is important to always check the rules and regulations if you are considering letting a minor drive a golf cart.

In most states (including Florida), a child has to be at least 14 years of age to be able to drive a golf cart. In other places such as Texas, the driver has to be around 16 years old. Then there are states such as California and South Carolina that allow children to drive golf carts at the age of 13.

It's also important to know what Florida defines as a golf cart versus an LSV (low-speed vehicle). [According to its statute](#), Florida defines an LSV as a four-wheeled electric vehicle whose top speed is greater than 20 mph, but less than 25 mph. The minute that golf cart exceeds speeds of 20 mph, it becomes an LSV and is subject to a different set of rules. In Florida, low-speed vehicles are considered motor vehicles and are required to be titled, registered, and insured with Personal Injury Protection and Property Damage Liability coverage in order to be operated on Florida streets and highways, while golf carts in Florida are not required to be insured (although insurance, even on golf carts, is highly recommended).

Also, any person operating an LSV must have a valid driver's license in their immediate possession. Be aware that your daughter may be able to drive the golf cart, but not an LSV—make sure you know which one you're renting!

So, even though a golf cart driver is not required by Florida law to be a licensed driver, it is nonetheless a good idea. In addition to being of age, drivers are also required to know the rules of the road and how to safely operate such a vehicle.

Now that you know your 14-year-old daughter can legally operate a golf cart in Florida, but not an LSV, you should also be aware of liability concerns and consider if it is worth the risk if she damages property or injures someone.

[Click here](#) to read more about this topic as well as safety tips when driving a golf cart!

Leone Equestrian Law is available to provide equine legal documents and contracts, including co-ownership agreements. Email info@equestriancounsel.com to request assistance with such documents or for any additional questions on this topic including how to handle stalemate situations when it comes to co-ownership and more details on forming an LLC.

Led by Armand Leone, Jr., MD, JD, MBA, Leone Equestrian Law LLC provides legal services and consultation for equestrian professionals ranging from riders and trainers to owners and show managers in the FEI disciplines on a wide variety of issues.

Visit www.equestriancounsel.com to learn more or email info@equestriancounsel.com with inquiries.

175 Rock Road - Glen Rock, NJ 07452 - 201.444.6444

