



CITY OF CANYON LAKE

"A Little Bit of Paradise"

Ordinance Review: Golf Cart Crossings and Compliance

Legal Disclaimer

This presentation is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The content provided herein is based on current interpretations of relevant laws and ordinances as understood by the City of Canyon Lake.

For specific legal advice, please consult with a qualified attorney or legal professional.

HISTORY

- The City of Canyon Lake established the Railroad Canyon Road Golf Cart Crossing by Ordinance Number 55 on **October 6, 1995**
- Cities may establish Golf Cart Crossings under California Vehicle Code Section 21115 and 21115.1
- No issues for almost 30 years



RSO GRANT

- Cal. OTS Grant which included stats from CL
- \$34,358 did not come to the City; stayed with RSO for education and enforcement priorities for public safety in CL
- City Council directive: focus on RRC speed and DUI (**as requested by CL residents after 7/4/23**)
- RRC NOT Canyon Lake Drive South



DECEMBER 2023

**DUI Saturation Patrol
(Funded by Grant \$\$)**



- In December 2023, the RSO conducted its first Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Saturation Patrol on Railroad Canyon Road
- **RSO confirmed that “golf carts” could cross Railroad Canyon Road but unregistered (non-street legal) low-speed vehicles could not.**

December 2023 DUI Saturation Patrol

RSO's material confirmed that "golf carts" could cross Railroad Canyon Road

Original RSO educational handout states "Golf carts are NOT street legal...EXCEPT: if you operate your golf cart on a highway designated for such use by ordinance or resolution within one mile of a golf course.



THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
PROVIDES THIS PUBLIC SAFETY INFORMATION
FOR GOLF CART USAGE OUTSIDE THE GATED
COMMUNITY OF CANYON LAKE



DUE TO THE RECENT INCREASE IN REPORTED AND UNREPORTED GOLF CART COLLISIONS IN THE CANYON LAKE AREA, THE LAKE ELSINORE SHERIFF'S STATION WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Golf carts are NOT street legal...EXCEPT: if you operate your golf cart on a highway designated for such use by ordinance or resolution within one mile of a golf course.

GOLF CARTS VS. LOW-SPEED VEHICLES

Golf Carts and Low-Speed Vehicles/Neighborhood Electric Vehicles have different definitions under the California Vehicle Code based on number of passengers, weight, and top speed.



GOLF CARTS VS. LOW-SPEED VEHICLES

A DISTINCTION WITHOUT A DIFFERENCE

CVC 21115 and 21115.1 explicitly state that for the purposes of a crossing established by a City, low-speed vehicles shall be considered “golf carts.”

The definition of low-speed vehicle acknowledges that a low-speed vehicle is considered a “golf cart” when operated pursuant to Section 21115 or 21115.1.

“...a “low-speed vehicle” is not a golf cart, ***except*** when operated pursuant to Section 21115 or 21115.1.” [CVC 385.5]

The City asserts that regardless of whether a particular vehicle meets the statutory definition of a “golf cart” or a “low-speed vehicle,” it is able to cross at Railroad Canyon Road under the City’s ordinance, and may do so without the need to “conform to any requirements of this [California Vehicle Code] with respect to registration, licensing, or equipment, except that if operated during darkness the golf cart [or low-speed vehicle] shall be subject to the provisions of Section 24001.5 regarding equipment.”

CALIFORNIA CODE, VEHICLE CODE - VEH § 21115

(a) If a local authority finds that a highway under its jurisdiction is located adjacent to, or provides access to, a golf course and between the golf course and the place where golf carts are parked or stored or is within or bounded by a real estate development offering golf facilities and is designed and constructed, so as to safely permit the use of regular vehicular traffic and also the driving of golf carts on the highway, the local authority may, by resolution or ordinance, designate the highway or portion of the highway for combined use and prescribe rules and regulations that shall have the force of law. No highway shall be so designated for a distance of more than one mile from the golf course if the highway is not located within a development or beyond the area of a development, provided, the finding of the local authority in this respect shall be conclusive. Upon the designation becoming effective it shall be lawful to drive golf carts upon the highway in accordance with the prescribed rules and regulations. The rules and regulations may establish crossing zones and speed limits and other operating standards but shall not require that the golf carts conform to any requirements of this code with respect to registration, licensing, or equipment, except that if operated during darkness the golf cart shall be subject to the provisions of Section 24001.5 regarding equipment.

The rules and regulations shall not be effective until appropriate signs giving notice thereof are posted along the highway affected.

A “real estate development offering golf facilities,” for purposes of this section, means an area of single-family or multiple-family residences, the owners or occupants of which are eligible for membership in, or the use of, one or more golf courses within the development by virtue of their ownership or occupancy of a residential dwelling unit in the development.

(b) For purposes of this section, a “golf cart” includes a low-speed vehicle.

CALIFORNIA CODE, VEHICLE CODE - VEH § 21115.1

(a) Notwithstanding Section 21115, a local authority may, by ordinance or resolution, establish crossing zones, for use by golf carts at any time other than during darkness, on any street, other than a state highway, that has a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour or less and that is immediately adjacent to a golf course. The crossing zones shall be at an angle of approximately 90 degrees to the direction of the roadway. The ordinance or resolution shall not become effective until submitted to the law enforcement agency having primary jurisdiction over the street, the law enforcement agency finds and determines that the conditions pertaining to that street, with the addition of proper signs, markers, or lighting, or any combination of those, will permit the establishment of a golf cart crossing with reasonable safety, and the signs, markers, or lighting specified by the law enforcement agency are in place.

(b) Subdivision (a) does not constitute precedent for the operation of golf carts on any street or highway other than in a crossing zone established pursuant to subdivision (a).

(c) For purposes of this section, a “golf cart” includes a low-speed vehicle

CALIFORNIA CODE, VEHICLE CODE - VEH § 385.5

(a) A "low-speed vehicle" is a motor vehicle that meets all of the following requirements:

(1) Has four wheels.

(2) Can attain a speed, in one mile, of more than 20 miles per hour and not more than 25 miles per hour, on a paved level surface.

(3) Has a gross vehicle weight rating of less than 3,000 pounds.

(b)

(1) For the purposes of this section, a "low-speed vehicle" is not a golf cart, except when operated pursuant to Section 21115 or 21115.1.

(2) A "low-speed vehicle" is also known as a "neighborhood electric vehicle."

JUNE/JULY 2024

DUI Saturation Patrol

In June/July 2024, the RSO conducted another Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Saturation Patrol on Railroad Canyon Road

RSO now states that golf carts cannot cross Railroad Canyon Road either.

Several citations were issued.

It is the City's position that these may not hold water in court based on CVC 21266(b).

GOLF CARTS

Can only be operated on roads with-in the Golf Cart Transportation Plan (GCTP). (CVC 21115)

Can not be registered with DMV as they do not have a 17 digit VIN or FMVSS certification.

Cannot cross a street with a posted speed limit greater than 45 mph. (CVC 21115.1)

Can not travel more than 15 mph. (CVC 345)

Cannot be equipped to transport more than two (2) people to include the driver. (CVC 345)

Cannot be modified to become an NEV. (CVC 385.5 & 580)

Must weigh less than 1,300 lbs.



**NOT ALLOWED TO CROSS
RAILROAD CANYON**

WHAT HAS COUNCIL BEEN DOING AND RSO'S RESPONSE

1) Communicating with RSO re
WHAT was going on

2) Reopened 1995 Ordinance
that RSO endorsed and began
discussions on existing
Ordinance

3) Draft a new Ordinance

4) Meetings/emails with city
staff and Lt, Captain, County
Counsel, councilmembers,
Elected Sheriff

1) First Saturation: RSO gave
warnings (said they wouldn't issue
tickets, education only)

2) Current RSO disagrees with
current Ordinance

3) RSO required to sign off on it;
wouldn't

4) Awaiting County Counsel approval
on newly drafted (second version)
Ordinance, Permit Process, Safety
Corridor, Transportation Plan

NEXT STEPS

Ensure Railroad Canyon Road Crossing Remains Safe

- Adoption of a Golf Cart Transportation Plan
- Review of Golf Cart Crossing Signage & Safety Measures
- Pursuing a “Safety Corridor” Designation for Railroad Canyon Road
- Launching a Vehicle Permit Process with the City (education on liability)

Continue to Engage with Riverside Sheriff’s Office

- Request citations issued be dismissed due to conflict with City ordinance, Cal. Vehicle Code and previous RSO educational materials
- Continue to Confer with County Counsel on City’s interpretation of Ordinance
- Continue trying to work together on making Railroad Canyon Road as safe as possible while maintaining the resident’s way of life



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