

**COUNTY OF TUSCOLA  
OFF ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) ORDINANCE #9**

An ordinance adopted for the purpose of authorizing and regulating the operation of off road vehicles (ORVs) on roads in Tuscola County, for the purpose of providing penalties for the violation thereof, and for the distribution of public funds resulting from those penalties pursuant to 2011 PA 107, MCL 324.81131.

THE COUNTY OF TUSCOLA ORDAINS:

**Section 1.** As used in this ordinance, the following definitions shall apply:

- a) "County" means the County of Tuscola.
- b) "Driver license" means an operator's or chauffeur's license or permit issued to an individual by the Secretary of State under chapter III of the Michigan vehicle code, 1949 PA 300, MCL 257.301 to 257.329, for that individual to operate a vehicle, whether or not conditions are attached to the license or permit.
- c) "Operate" means to ride in or on, and be in actual physical control of the operation of an ORV.
- d) "Operator" means a person who operates or is in actual physical control of the operation of an ORV.
- e) "ORV" means a motor driven off road recreation vehicle capable of cross country travel without benefit of a road or trail, on or immediately over land, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain. ORV or vehicle includes, but is not limited to, a multitrack or multi-wheel drive vehicle, an ATV, a motorcycle or related 2-wheel, 3-wheel, or 4-wheel vehicle, an amphibious machine, a ground effect air cushion vehicle, or other means of transportation deriving motive power from a source other than muscle or wind. ORV or vehicle does not include a registered or unregistered snowmobile, golf cart, a farm vehicle being used for farming, a vehicle used for military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement purposes, a vehicle owned and operated by a utility company or an oil or gas company when performing maintenance on its facilities or on property over which it has an easement, a construction or logging vehicle used in performance of its common function, or a registered aircraft.
- f) "Road" means a county primary road or county local road as described in section 5 of 1951 PA 1951, MCL 247.655.
- g) "Road Commission" means the Board of County Road Commissioners for the County of Tuscola.
- h) "Safety certificate" means a certificate issued pursuant to 1994 PA 451 as amended, MCL 324.81129, or a comparable ORV safety certificate issued under the authority of another state or a province of Canada.

- i) "Street" means a city or village major street or village local street as described in section 9 of 1951 PA 51, MCL 247.659.
- j) "Township" means an individual township within the County of Tuscola.
- k) "Township board" means a board of trustees of any township within the County of Tuscola.
- l) "Visual supervision" means the direct observation of the operator with the unaided or normally corrected eye, where the observer is able to come to the immediate aid of the operator.

**Section 2.** An ORV may be operated on the far right of the maintained portion of a road within the County with these exceptions:

- a) Provided however, that in the event that either the Road Commission has CLOSED, or in the event a Township has adopted an Ordinance or Resolution which CLOSED, certain road(s) to ORV use, pursuant to MCL 324.81131(4), operation otherwise permitted under this Ordinance shall not be considered authorized, with respect to such closed road(s).
- b) This Ordinance is not intended to authorize the operation of an ORV on a street or highway which is under jurisdiction of a municipality, nor upon a State Trunkline Highway.

**Section 3.** The Road Commission may close no more than 30% of the total linear miles of roads in the County to protect the environment or if the operation of ORVs pose a particular and demonstrable threat to public safety. The Road Commission may not close a municipal street to ORVs opened under MCL 324.81131 subsection 5.

**Section 4.** An ORV may not be operated on the road surface, roadway, shoulder or right-of-way of any state or federal highway in the County.

**Section 5.** Except as set forth herein or otherwise provided by law, an ORV meeting all of the following conditions may be operated on a road or street in the County:

- a) At a speed of no more than 25 miles per hour or a lower posted ORV speed limit.
- b) By a person not less than 12 years of age.
- c) With the flow of traffic.
- d) In a manner which does not interfere with traffic on the road or street.
- e) Traveling single file except when overtaking and passing another ORV.
- f) When visibility is not substantially reduced due to weather conditions.

- g) While displaying a lighted headlight and lighted taillight at all hours.
- h) While the operator and each passenger is wearing a crash helmet and protective eyewear approved by the United States Department of Transportation unless the vehicle is equipped with a roof that meets or exceeds standards for a crash helmet and the operator and each passenger is wearing a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt.
- i) With a throttle so designed that when the pressure used to advance the throttle is removed, the engine speed will immediately and automatically return to idle.
- j) While the ORV is equipped with a spark arrester type United States Forest Service approved muffler in good working order and in constant operation.
- k) Pursuant to noise emission standards defined by law.

**Section 6.** A child less than 18 years of age shall not operate an ORV on a road in the County unless the child is in possession of a valid driver license or under the direct visual supervision of a parent or guardian and the child has in his or her immediate possession a Michigan issued ORV safety certificate or a comparable ORV safety certificate issued under the authority of another state or a province of Canada.

**Section 7.** Unless a person possesses a valid driver's license, a person shall not operate an ORV on a Road or Street in the County if the ORV is registered as a motor vehicle and is either more than 60 inches wide or has three wheels.

**Section 8.** The Road Commission, the County Board of Commissioners, and the County are immune from tort liability for injuries or damages sustained by any person arising in any way out of the operation or use of an ORV on maintained or unmaintained roads, streets, shoulders, and rights-of-way over which the Road Commission or the County Board of Commissioners has jurisdiction.

**Section 9.** In a court action in this state, if competent evidence demonstrates that a vehicle is permitted to operate on a road or street pursuant to the code was in a collision with an ORV required to be operated on the far right of the maintained portion of a road or street pursuant to this ordinance, the operator of the ORV shall be considered prima facie negligent.

**Section 10.** Any person who violates this Ordinance is guilty of a municipal civil infraction and may be ordered to pay a civil fine of not more that \$500.00.

**Section 11.** In addition to the penalties under Section 10 of this Ordinance, a court may order a person who causes damage to the environment, a road or other property as a result of the operation of an ORV to pay full restitution for that damage above and beyond the penalties paid for civil fines.

**Section 12.** The County Treasurer shall deposit all fines and damages collected under this ordinance into a fund to be designated as the ORV fund. The County Board of

Commissioners shall appropriate revenue in the ORV fund as specified in MCL 324.81131 (14):

- a) Fifty percent to the Road Commission for repairing damage to roads and the environment that may have been caused by ORVs, and for posting signs indicating ORV speed limits, or indicating whether roads are opened or closed to the operation of ORVs.
- b) Fifty percent to the County Sheriff for ORV enforcement and training.

**Section 13.** An ORV may only be operated on Roads between the hours of 5:00 am and 10:00 pm.

**Section 14.** Should a portion of this Ordinance be found invalid for any reason, such holding shall not be construed as affecting the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

**Section 15.** This ordinance becomes effective after publication and expiration of the time prescribed by law.

This Ordinance is adopted by action of the County of Tuscola Board of Commissioners this 24<sup>th</sup> day of June 2021.



Thomas Bardwell, Chairperson  
Tuscola County Board of Commissioners

CERTIFICATION

I, Jodi Fetting, Clerk of the County of Tuscola, do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the Ordinance duly adopted by the County of Tuscola Board of Commissioners on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of June 2021.



Tuscola County Clerk