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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES

Introduced By: Representatives Ucci, Solomon, and Barros

Date Introduced: February 28, 2018

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 31-1-3 and 31-1-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-1 entitled
2 "Definitions and General Code Provisions" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **31-1-3. Types of vehicles.**

4 (a) (1) "Antique motor car" means any motor vehicle that is more than twenty-five (25)
5 years old. Unless fully inspected and meeting inspection requirements, the vehicle may be
6 maintained solely for use in exhibitions, club activities, parades, and other functions of public
7 interest. The vehicle may also be used for limited enjoyment and purposes other than the
8 previously mentioned activities, but may not be used primarily for the transportation of
9 passengers or goods over any public highway.

10 (2) After the vehicle has met the requirements of state inspection, a registration plate may
11 be issued to it on payment of the standard fee. The vehicle may be operated on the highways of
12 this and other states, and may, in addition to the registration plate, retain the designation "antique"
13 and display an "antique plate".

14 (3) For any vehicle that is more than twenty-five (25) years old, the division of motor
15 vehicles may also issue or approve, subject to rules and regulations that may be promulgated by
16 the administrator, a "year of manufacture plate" for the vehicle that is an exact replica plate
17 designating the exact year of manufacture of the vehicle.

18 (b) (1) "Antique motorcycle" means any motorcycle that is more than twenty-five (25)
19 years old. Unless fully inspected and meeting inspection requirements, the vehicle shall be

1 maintained solely for use in exhibitions, club activities, parades, and other functions of public
2 interest. The vehicle may also be used for limited enjoyment and purposes other than the
3 previously mentioned activities, but may not be used primarily for the transportation of
4 passengers or goods over any public highway; and

5 (2) After the vehicle has met the requirements of state inspection, a registration plate may
6 be issued to it, on payment of the standard fee, and the vehicle may be operated on the highways
7 of this and other states, and may, in addition to the registration plate, retain the designation
8 "antique" and display an "antique plate".

9 (c) "Authorized emergency vehicle" means vehicles of the fire department (fire patrol);
10 police vehicles; vehicles used by Rhode Island state marshals in the department of corrections;
11 vehicles used by the state bomb squad within the division of state fire marshal; vehicles of
12 municipal departments or public service corporations designated or authorized by the
13 administrator as ambulances and emergency vehicles; and privately owned motor vehicles of
14 volunteer firefighters or privately owned motor vehicles of volunteer ambulance drivers or
15 attendants, as authorized by the department chief or commander and permitted by the Rhode
16 Island Association of Fire Chiefs and Rhode Island Association of Police Chiefs Joint Committee
17 for Volunteer Warning Light Permits.

18 (d) "Automobile" means, for registration purposes, every motor vehicle carrying
19 passengers other than for hire.

20 (e) "Bicycle" means every vehicle having two (2) tandem wheels, except scooters and
21 similar devices, propelled exclusively by human power, and upon which a person may ride.

22 (f) "Camping recreational vehicle" means a vehicular type camping unit, certified by the
23 manufacturer as complying with ANSI A119.2 Standards, designed primarily as temporary living
24 quarters for recreation that has either its own motor power or is mounted on, or towed by, another
25 vehicle. The basic units are tent trailers, fifth-wheel trailers, motorized campers, travel trailers,
26 and pick-up campers.

27 (g) "Electric motorized bicycles" means a motorized bicycle that may be propelled by
28 human power or electric motor power, or by both, with an electric motor rated not more than two
29 (2) (S.A.E.) horsepower, that is capable of a maximum speed of not more than twenty-five (25)
30 miles per hour.

31 (h) "Electric personal assistive mobility device" ("EPAMD") is a self-balancing, non-
32 tandem two-wheeled (2) device, designed to transport only one person, with an electric
33 propulsion system that limits the maximum speed of the device to fifteen (15) miles per hour.

34 (i) Fifth-wheel trailer: A towable recreational vehicle, not exceeding four hundred (400)

1 square feet in area, designed to be towed by a motorized vehicle that contains a towing
2 mechanism that is mounted above or forward of the tow vehicle's rear axle and that is eligible to
3 be registered for highway use.

4 (j) "Hearse" means every motor vehicle used for transporting human corpses. A hearse
5 shall be considered an automobile for registration purposes.

6 (k) "Jitney or bus" means: (1) A "public bus" that includes every motor vehicle, trailer,
7 semi-trailer, tractor trailer, or tractor trailer combination, used for the transportation of passengers
8 for hire, and operated wholly or in part upon any street or highway as a means of transportation
9 similar to that afforded by a street railway company, by indiscriminately receiving or discharging
10 passengers, or running on a regular route or over any portion of one, or between fixed termini; or
11 (2) A "private bus" that includes every motor vehicle other than a public bus or passenger van
12 designed for carrying more than ten (10) passengers and used for the transportation of persons,
13 and every motor vehicle other than a taxicab designed and used for the transportation of persons
14 for compensation.

15 (l) "Monster truck" means a motor vehicle, usually a pickup truck, equipped with larger
16 suspensions and tires and generally used in racing events or other exhibitions and not upon the
17 public highways. Monster trucks may be used for such activities and upon public highways only
18 for use in exhibitions, club activities, parades and other functions of public interest.

19 ~~(m)~~(m) "Motorcycle" means only those motor vehicles having not more than three (3)
20 wheels in contact with the ground and a saddle on which the driver sits astride, except bicycles
21 with helper motors as defined in subsection (n) of this section.

22 ~~(n)~~(n) "Motor-driven cycle" means every motorcycle, including every motor scooter,
23 with a motor of no greater than five (5) horsepower, except bicycles with helper motors as
24 defined in subsection (n) of this section.

25 ~~(o)~~(o) "Motorized bicycles" means two-wheel (2) vehicles that may be propelled by
26 human power or helper power, or by both, with a motor rated not more than four and nine-tenths
27 (4.9) horsepower and not greater than fifty (50) cubic centimeters, that are capable of a maximum
28 speed of not more than thirty (30) miles per hour.

29 ~~(p)~~(p) Motorized camper: A camping recreational vehicle, built on, or permanently
30 attached to, a self-propelled motor vehicle chassis cab or van that is an integral part of the
31 completed vehicle.

32 ~~(q)~~(q) "Motorized tricycles" means tricycles that may be propelled by human power or
33 helper motor, or by both, with a motor rated no more than 1.5 brake horsepower that is capable of
34 a maximum speed of not more than thirty (30) miles per hour.

1 ~~(r)~~(r) "Motorized wheelchair" means any self-propelled vehicle, designed for, and used
2 by, a person with a disability that is incapable of speed in excess of eight (8) miles per hour.

3 ~~(s)~~(s) "Motor scooter" means a motor-driven cycle with a motor rated not more than four
4 and nine-tenths (4.9) horsepower and not greater than fifty (50) cubic centimeters that is capable
5 of a maximum speed of not more than thirty (30) miles per hour.

6 ~~(t)~~(t) "Motor vehicle" means every vehicle that is self-propelled or propelled by electric
7 power obtained from overhead trolley wires, but not operated upon rails, except vehicles moved
8 exclusively by human power, an EPAMD and electric motorized bicycles as defined in subsection
9 (g) of this section, and motorized wheelchairs.

10 ~~(u)~~(u) "Motor vehicle for hire" means every motor vehicle other than jitneys, public buses,
11 hearses, and motor vehicles used chiefly in connection with the conduct of funerals, to transport
12 persons for compensation in any form, or motor vehicles rented for transporting persons either
13 with or without furnishing an operator.

14 ~~(v)~~(v) Park trailer: A camping recreational vehicle that is eligible to be registered for
15 highway use and meets the following criteria: (1) Built on a single chassis mounted on wheels;
16 and (2) Certified by the manufacturer as complying with ANSI A119.5.

17 ~~(w)~~(w) "Passenger van" means every motor vehicle capable of carrying ten (10) to
18 fourteen (14) passengers plus an operator and used for personal use or on a not-for-hire basis.
19 Passenger vans may be used for vanpools, transporting passengers to and from work locations,
20 provided that the operator receives no remuneration other than free use of the vehicle.

21 ~~(x)~~(x) "Pedal carriages" (also known as "quadricycles") means a nonmotorized bicycle
22 with four (4) or more wheels operated by one or more persons for the purpose of, or capable of,
23 transporting additional passengers in seats or on a platform made a part of or otherwise attached
24 to the pedal carriage. The term shall not include a bicycle with trainer or beginner wheels affixed
25 to it, nor shall it include a wheelchair or other vehicle with the purpose of operation by or for the
26 transportation of a handicapped person, nor shall it include a tricycle built for a child or an adult
27 with a seat for only one operator and no passenger.

28 ~~(y)~~(y) "Pick-up camper": A camping recreational vehicle consisting of a roof, floor, and
29 sides designed to be loaded onto and unloaded from the back of a pick-up truck.

30 ~~(z)~~(z) "Rickshaws" (also known as "pedi cabs") means a nonmotorized bicycle with three
31 (3) wheels operated by one person for the purpose of, or capable of, transporting additional
32 passengers in seats or on a platform made a part of, or otherwise attached to, the rickshaw. This
33 definition shall not include a bicycle built for two (2) where the operators are seated one behind
34 the other, nor shall it include the operation of a bicycle with trainer or beginner wheels affixed

1 thereto, nor shall it include a wheelchair or other vehicle with the purpose of operation by or for
2 the transportation of a handicapped person.

3 ~~(z)~~(aa) "School bus" means every motor vehicle owned by a public or governmental
4 agency, when operated for the transportation of children to or from school; or privately owned,
5 when operated for compensation for the transportation of children to or from school.

6 ~~(aa)~~(bb) "Suburban vehicle" means every motor vehicle with a convertible or
7 interchangeable body or with removable seats, usable for both passenger and delivery purposes,
8 and including motor vehicles commonly known as station or depot wagons or any vehicle into
9 which access can be gained through the rear by means of a hatch or trunk and where the rear seats
10 can be folded down to permit the carrying of articles as well as passengers.

11 ~~(bb)~~(cc) "Tent trailer": A towable recreational vehicle that is mounted on wheels and
12 constructed with collapsible partial side walls that fold for towing by another vehicle and unfold
13 for use and that is eligible to be registered for highway use.

14 ~~(ee)~~(dd) "Trackless trolley coach" means every motor vehicle that is propelled by electric
15 power obtained from overhead trolley wires, but not operated on rails.

16 ~~(dd)~~(ee) Travel trailer: A towable recreational vehicle, not exceeding three hundred
17 twenty (320) square feet in area, designed to be towed by a motorized vehicle containing a towing
18 mechanism that is mounted behind the tow vehicle's bumper and that is eligible to be registered
19 for highway use.

20 ~~(ee)~~(ff) "Vehicle" means every device in, upon, or by which any person or property is or
21 may be transported or drawn upon a highway, except devices used exclusively upon stationary
22 rails or tracks.

23 **31-1-6. Specially constructed and reconstructed vehicles.**

24 (a) "Essential parts" means all integral and body parts of a vehicle of a type that must be
25 registered under chapters 3 -- 9 of this title, the removal, alteration, or substitution of which
26 would tend to conceal the identity of the vehicle or substantially alter its appearance, model, type,
27 or mode of operation.

28 (b) "Reconstructed vehicle" means every vehicle of a type that must be registered under
29 chapters 3 -- 9 of this title, which has been materially altered from its original construction by the
30 removal, addition, or substitution of essential parts, new or used.

31 (c) "Specially constructed vehicle" means every vehicle of a type that must be registered
32 under chapters 3 -- 9 of this title, but not originally constructed under a distinctive name, make,
33 model, or type by a generally recognized manufacturer of vehicles; provided, that specially
34 constructed vehicles shall include hand-built, home-built, and one-off cars that do not resemble

1 any production car. Specially constructed vehicles shall be entitled to standard passenger
2 automobile plates; provided, that all safety and emissions standards applied to reconstructed
3 vehicles are met. [Nothing contained in this subsection shall prohibit the use of a specially](#)
4 [constructed vehicle for use in exhibitions, club activities, parades and other functions of public](#)
5 [interest.](#)

6 SECTION 2. Section 31-23-13.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-23 entitled
7 "Equipment and Accessories Generally" is hereby amended to read as follows:

8 **31-23-13.1. Altering height of or operating a motor vehicle with an altered height**
9 **prohibited.**

10 No person shall alter the height of or operate a motor vehicle with an altered height that
11 has an original manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating of up to and including ten thousand
12 pounds (10,000 lbs.), by elevating or lowering the chassis or body by more than four inches (4")
13 from the original manufacturers' specified height by use of so called "shackle lift kits" for leaf
14 springs or by use of lift kits for coil springs, tires, or any other means or device. The administrator
15 of the division of motor vehicles shall establish rules and regulations for motor vehicle heights
16 including exceptions for vehicles used for farming or forestry. No motor vehicle that has been so
17 altered, modified, or changed beyond the provisions of this section or the rules and regulations
18 established by the administrator of the division of motor vehicles, shall be operated on any
19 highway. Violations of this section are subject to fines enumerated in § 31-41.1-4. [Nothing](#)
20 [contained in this section shall prohibit the use of a monster truck as defined in § 31-1-3\(l\) and for](#)
21 [the limited purposes stated therein.](#)

22 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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1 This act would permit the use of monster trucks and specially constructed vehicles to be
2 used upon the public highways for limited purposes.

3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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