

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ORDINANCE
ORDINANCE No. 6

PREAMBLE

An ordinance adopted for the purpose of authorizing and regulating the operation of off-road vehicles (ORVs) on roads in Grand Traverse County, for the purpose of providing penalties for the violation thereof, and for the distribution of public funds resulting from those penalties pursuant to 2008 Public Act 240, MCL 324.81131.

Section I: Name

This ordinance shall be known and cited as the "Grand Traverse County Off-Road Vehicle Ordinance, Ordinance No. 6."

Section II: Purpose

The purpose of this ordinance is the regulation of ORVs in Grand Traverse County.

Section III: Definitions

- A. "County" shall mean Grand Traverse County.
- B. "Driver's license" shall mean 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, Public Act 300 of 1949, 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" shall mean 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" shall mean 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 snowmobile, 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" shall mean a county primary road or county local road as described in section 5 of Public Act 51 of 1951, MCL 247.655.
- G. "Road Commission" shall mean the Board of County Road Commissioners for Grand Traverse County.
- H. "Safety certificate" shall mean a certificate issued pursuant to Public Act 451 of 1994 as amended, MCL 324.81129, or a comparable ORV safety certificate issued under the authority of another state or a province of Canada.
- I. "Township" shall mean an individual township within Grand Traverse County.
- J. "Township board" shall mean a board of trustees of any township within Grand Traverse County.
- K. "Visual supervision" shall mean 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 IV: Regulations

- A. Operation on Roads; Exceptions. An ORV may be operated on the far right of the maintained portion of a road within the County with these exceptions:
 - 1. All State roads.
 - 2. All Federal roads.
 - 3. All roads within Garfield Township.
 - 4. All roads within Acme Township.
 - 5. Robertson Road, South of Davis within Grant Township.
 - 6. The following roads within Peninsula Township: Peninsula Drive from the Traverse City limit to Gray Road; East Shore Road; Bluff Road between M-37 and Blue Water Road.

7. Garfield Road from Garfield Township to Mayfield Rd.
8. The following roads in East Bay Township: Garfield Road and Hammond Road West of Three Mile.

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

1. 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.
2. At a speed of no more than 25 miles per hour or a lower posted ORV speed limit.
3. By a person not less than 12 years of age.
4. With the flow of traffic.
5. In a manner which does not interfere with traffic on the road or street.
6. Traveling single file except when overtaking and passing another ORV.
7. While displaying a lighted headlight and lighted taillight at all hours beginning January 1, 2010.
8. While the operator and each passenger are 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.
9. 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.
10. While the ORV is equipped with a spark arrester type United States Forest Service approved muffler in good working order and in constant operation.
11. Pursuant to noise emission standards defined by law.
12. A child less than 16 years of age shall not operate an ORV on a road in the County unless the child is under the direct visual supervision of an

adult 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.

13. 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.

C. Road Closure

1. A township board of a township in the County may adopt an ordinance to close any roads within the boundaries of the township to the operation of ORVs permitted by the County.
 - a.) Beginning July 17, 2009, the township board of a township in the County may adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of ORVs on the maintained portion of 1 or more roads located within the township, pursuant to MCL 324.81131(3).
 - b.) Whenever an amendment to a township ordinance is adopted that affects which roads are open to ORV use, the local Clerk shall provide the County Clerk with the changes enacted by the township board. The Clerk shall immediately notify the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department and the Road Commission of such changes so that they may prepare appropriate revisions to the County's ORV Recreational Trail map
2. The County 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 V: Penalty

- A. 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 than \$500.00.
- B. 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.
- C. 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 follows:

1. Fifty percent to the County 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.
2. Fifty percent to the County Sheriff for ORV enforcement and training.

Section VI: Miscellaneous

- A. This ordinance, as amended and restated, shall take effect thirty (30) days after publications as required by law. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with any of the provision of this ordinance are hereby repealed.
- B. This ordinance shall not supersede any existing related city or village authority ordinance, but shall be in addition to, and not in conflict with all other laws and ordinances respecting street and road numbering.
- C. The provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared to be severable, and if any clause, sentence, word, section, or provision is declared void or unenforceable for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction the remaining portions of said ordinance shall remain in force.



Chairperson Board of Commissioners
County of Grand Traverse

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Published in Record Eagle: 10/25/2025

Effective Date: 10/15/2025

Grand Traverse County Road Commission ORV Restricted Roads

Legend

Grand Traverse County Roads

DESCRIPTION

- PRIVATE (no trespassing)
- PUBLIC AND PRIVATE (limited use)



September 23, 2013

Closed To ORV Travel

- ■ ■ Restricted Unpaved Roads
- ■ ■ Restricted Paved Roads

Municipal Roads*

Open to ORV Travel

- Open to ORV Travel

* Municipal roads are under local control - please contact the city or village for information regarding ORV use within their respective jurisdictions.

