

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 451 of 1994

324.81131 Ordinance allowing disabled person to operate ORV; notice of public hearing; closure of county road to operation of ORVs; operation of ORVs on highway; operation of ORV with flow of traffic; maintaining county road or street or highway not required; immunity from tort liability; "gross negligence" defined; operator of ORV as prima facie negligent; violation as municipal civil infraction; deposit of fines; violation as state civil infraction.

Sec. 81131.

(1) A municipality may pass an ordinance allowing a permanently disabled person to operate an ORV in that municipality.

(2) Subject to subsection (4), a county board of commissioners may adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of ORVs on 1 or more county roads located within the county. Not less than 45 days before a public hearing on the ordinance, the county clerk shall send notice of the public hearing, by certified mail, to the county road commission, to the legislative body of each township and municipality located within the county, to the state transportation department if the road intersects a highway, and, if state forestland is located within the county, to the department. If the county is a southern county, before adopting an ordinance under this subsection, the county board of commissioners shall consult with the board of county road commissioners.

(3) Subject to subsection (4), the legislative body of a township or municipality may adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of ORVs on 1 or more county roads located within the township or municipality, respectively. Not less than 28 days before a public hearing on the ordinance, the clerk of the township or municipality shall send notice of the public hearing, by certified mail, to the county road commission, to the county board of commissioners, to the legislative body of every other township and municipality located within the county, to the state transportation department if the road intersects a highway, and, if state forestland is located within the township or municipality, to the department. If the township or municipality is located in a southern county, before adopting an ordinance under this subsection, the legislative body of the township or municipality shall consult with the board of county road commissioners. This subsection does not apply to a township or municipality until 1 year after the effective date of the amendatory act that first authorized the county in which that township or municipality is located to adopt an ordinance under subsection (2).

(4) The board of county road commissioners may close a county road to the operation of ORVs otherwise authorized pursuant to subsection (2) or (3). A county road commission shall not under this subsection close more than 30% of the linear miles of county roads located within the county to the operation of ORVs otherwise authorized pursuant to subsection (2) or (3). The legislative body of a township or municipality may adopt an ordinance to close a county road located in the township or municipality to the operation of ORVs otherwise authorized pursuant to subsection (2). The legislative body of a village may adopt an ordinance to close a county road located in the village to the operation of ORVs otherwise authorized by the township pursuant to subsection (3). A county road may be closed to the operation of ORVs under this subsection only to protect the environment or if the operation of ORVs poses a particular and demonstrable threat to public safety.

(5) The legislative body of a municipality may adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of ORVs on 1 or more streets within the municipality.

(6) The legislative body of a local unit of government may request the state transportation department to authorize the local unit of government to adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of ORVs on a highway, other than an interstate highway, located within the local unit of government. The request shall describe how the authorization would meet the requirements of subsection (7). The state transportation department shall solicit comment on the request from the department, ORV clubs, and local units of government where the highway is located. The state transportation department shall consider comments received on the request before making a decision on the request. The state transportation department shall grant the request in whole or in part or deny the request not more than 60 days after the request is received. If the state transportation department grants a request in whole or in part under this subsection, the local unit of government that submitted the request may adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of ORVs on the highway that was the subject of the request. A county may submit a request for authorization under this subsection on behalf of 1 or more local units of government located within that county if requested by those local units of government. Before January 1, 2015, the state transportation department may authorize the operation of ORVs on a highway as provided in this subsection and subsection (7) on the department's initiative and without having received a request from a local unit of government.

(7) The state transportation department shall authorize operation of an ORV under subsection (6) only on a highway that is not an interstate highway and that meets 1 or more of the following requirements:

(a) Serves as a connector between ORV areas, routes, or trails designated by the department or an ORV user group.

- (b) Provides access to tourist attractions, food service establishments, fuel, motels, or other services.
- (c) Serves as a connector between 2 segments of the same county road that run along discontinuous town lines and on which ORV use is authorized pursuant to subsection (2) or (3).
- (d) Includes a bridge or culvert that allows an ORV to cross a river, stream, wetland, or gully that is not crossed by a street or county road on which ORVs are authorized to operate under subsection (2), (3), or (5).
- (8) The state transportation department may close a highway to the operation of ORVs otherwise authorized pursuant to subsection (6) after written notice to the clerk of each local unit of government where the highway is located and the senate and house committees with primary responsibility for natural resources, recreation, and transportation. The notice shall be in writing and sent by first-class United States mail or personally delivered not less than 30 days before the adoption of the rule or order closing the highway. The notice shall set forth specific reasons for the closure.
- (9) Subject to subsection (4), if a local unit of government adopts an ordinance pursuant to subsection (2), (3), or (5), a person may operate an ORV with the flow of traffic on the far right of the maintained portion of the street or county road covered by the ordinance. If the operation of ORVs on a highway is authorized pursuant to subsection (6), a person may operate an ORV with the flow of traffic as follows:
- (a) On the right shoulder of the highway.
- (b) If there is not a right shoulder or the right shoulder is not of adequate width, on the right unmaintained portion of the highway.
- (c) On the far right of the right traffic lane of the highway, if necessary to cross a bridge or culvert and if the operator brings the ORV to a complete stop before entering and yields the right-of-way to an approaching vehicle on that traffic lane.
- (10) A person shall not operate an ORV as authorized pursuant to subsection (2), (3), (5), or (6) at a speed greater than 25 miles per hour or a lower posted ORV speed limit or in a manner that interferes with traffic on the street, county road, or highway.
- (11) Unless the person possesses a license as defined in section 25 of the Michigan vehicle code, 1949 PA 300, MCL 257.25, a person shall not operate an ORV as authorized pursuant to subsection (2), (3), (5), or (6) if the ORV is registered as a motor vehicle under chapter II of the Michigan vehicle code, 1949 PA 300, MCL 257.201 to 257.259, and either is more than 65 inches wide or has 3 wheels. ORVs operated as authorized pursuant to subsection (2), (3), (5), or (6) shall travel single file, except that an ORV may travel abreast of another ORV when it is overtaking and passing, or being overtaken and passed by, another ORV.
- (12) A person shall not operate an ORV as authorized pursuant to this section without displaying a lighted headlight and lighted taillight.
- (13) A person under 18 years of age shall not operate an ORV as authorized pursuant to this section unless the person is in possession of a valid driver license or under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian and the person has in his or her immediate possession an ORV safety certificate issued pursuant to this part or a comparable ORV safety certificate issued under the authority of another state or a province of Canada. A person under 12 years of age shall not operate an ORV as authorized pursuant to this section. The requirements of this subsection are in addition to any applicable requirements of section 81129.
- (14) A township that has authorized the operation of ORVs on a county road under subsection (3) does not have a duty to maintain the maintained portion or unmaintained portion of the county road in a condition reasonably safe and convenient for the operation of ORVs. This state does not have a duty to maintain a highway in reasonable repair so that it is reasonably safe and convenient for the operation of ORVs except ORVs registered and operated as motor vehicles as provided in the code. A board of county road commissioners, a county board of commissioners, or a municipality does not have a duty to maintain the maintained portion or unmaintained portion of a county road or street under its jurisdiction in a condition reasonably safe and convenient for the operation of ORVs, except the following ORVs:
- (a) ORVs registered and operated as motor vehicles as provided in the code.
- (b) ORVs operated as authorized pursuant to subsection (1).
- (15) Subject to section 5 of 1964 PA 170, MCL 691.1405, this state, a board of county road commissioners, a county board of commissioners, and a local unit of government are immune from tort liability for injuries or damages sustained by any person arising in any way out of the operation or use, on the maintained portion or unmaintained portion of a highway, road, or street, of an ORV that is not registered under the code or that is registered under the code but is operated as authorized pursuant to subsection (2), (3), (5), or (6). The immunity provided by this subsection does not apply to actions of an employee of this state, an employee of a board of county road commissioners, an employee of a county board of commissioners, or an employee of a local unit of government that constitute gross negligence. As used in this subsection, "gross negligence" means conduct so reckless as to demonstrate a substantial lack of concern for whether an injury results.
- (16) In a court action in this state, if competent evidence demonstrates that a vehicle that is permitted to operate on a road, street, or highway pursuant to the code was in a collision on a roadway with an ORV that is not registered under the code, the operator of the ORV shall be considered prima facie negligent.
- (17) A violation of an ordinance described in this section is a municipal civil infraction. The ordinance may

provide for a fine of not more than \$500.00 for a violation of the ordinance. In addition, the court shall order the defendant to pay the cost of repairing any damage to the environment, a street, county road, or highway, or public property as a result of the violation.

(18) The treasurer of the local unit of government shall deposit fines collected by that local unit of government under section 8379 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.8379, and subsection (17) and damages collected under subsection (17) into a fund to be designated as the "ORV fund". The legislative body of the local unit of government shall appropriate revenue in the ORV fund as follows:

(a) Fifty percent to the county sheriff or police department responsible for law enforcement in the local unit of government for ORV enforcement and training.

(b) Fifty percent to the board of county road commissioners or, in the case of a city or village, to the department responsible for street maintenance in the city or village. However, if a fine was collected for a violation of an ordinance adopted under subsection (6), 50% of the fine revenue shall be appropriated to the state transportation department. Revenue appropriated under this subdivision shall be used for repairing damage to streets, county roads, or highways and the environment that may have been caused by ORVs and for posting signs indicating ORV speed limits or indicating whether streets, county roads, or highways are open or closed to the operation of ORVs under this section.

(19) A person who violates a rule promulgated or order issued under subsection (6) is responsible for a state civil infraction and may be ordered to pay a civil fine of not more than \$500.00. In addition, the court shall order the defendant to pay the cost of repairing any damage to the environment, a highway, or public property as a result of the violation.

History: Add. 1995, Act 58, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995 ;-- Am. 2008, Act 240, Imd. Eff. July 17, 2008 ;-- Am. 2009, Act 175, Imd. Eff. Dec. 15, 2009 ;-- Am. 2011, Act 107, Imd. Eff. July 19, 2011 ;-- Am. 2013, Act 117, Imd. Eff. Sept. 25, 2013 ;-- Am. 2013, Act 118, Imd. Eff. Sept. 25, 2013

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

Popular Name: Off-Road Vehicle Act

Popular Name: ORV