Heading to a Lexington pool or park? Driving a golf cart on streets is illegal

BY BETH MUSGRAVE
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As more people head to Lexington parks and pools to beat summer heat, a warm-weather breed of traffic scofflaws are hitting the streets — golf cart drivers.

They're breaking the law, Lexington police said.

Lexington prohibits driving golf carts on streets, said Hannah Sloan, a public information officer with the Lexington Police Department.

"The operation of a golf cart on the roadways, other than a designated crossing on or around a golf course is prohibited in Lexington. There are no ordinances that allow golf carts," Sloan said.

Using golf carts to make short trips to pools and beaches has become popular in many resort and beach towns across the country. For example, Madison, Indiana, allows the use of golf carts on limited streets. Golf carts have also long been the go-to mode of transportation in large retirement communities.

The fairway staple started appearing on more Lexington streets five years ago.

Complaints about their use have largely centered in the Chevy Chase, Lansdowne and Lansdowne Merrick areas, which are home to various parks and private pools.

Those who have complained about their use on city streets say the electric-powered carts are too slow, slowing the traffic flow. Others have reported seeing kids under the age of 16 driving golf carts. State law prohibits anyone under the age of 16 from driving a golf cart, Lexington police have said.

Motorized vehicles are also not allowed on city sidewalks, according to the Lexington Police Department website about city rules on scooters, mopeds and other non-automobile motorized vehicles.

Lexington Police and city officials have long battled misconceptions about golf cart use on city streets.

A state law says a city can allow golf carts, if it has an ordinance allowing it. Lexington has no such ordinance, police said.

Sloan said the city investigates complaints about golf carts.

"If someone sees a golf cart on a roadway, they should call Lexington Police at (859) 258-3600 or in an emergency, 911," Sloan said.

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Senate blocks plan to force food stamp costs on states

BY MELISSA NANN BURKE AND GRANT SCHWAB
The Detroit News

WASHINGTON

The Senate parliamentarian rejected an effort by Republicans in Congress to force states to take on significantly more costs associated with the federal food assistance program known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

The decision by the parliamentarian that the provision doesn't meet the strict rules of the so-called budget reconciliation process means that it will have to be stripped from the bill or altered to comply with the guidelines.

Senate Agriculture panel Chairman John Boozman of Arkansas indicated in a statement over the weekend that his staff is looking for ways to revise the cost-share plan so that it could survive and remain in the package.

"To rein in federal spending and protect taxpayer dollars the committee is pursuing meaningful reforms to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to improve efficiency, accountability and integrity," Boozman said in a statement.

"We are continuing to examine options that comply with Senate rules to achieve savings through budget reconciliation to ensure SNAP serves those who truly need it while being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars."

The Senate GOP's version of the legislation softened the House cost-share provision and would have, starting in 2028, required states to shoulder up to 15% of the SNAP program's benefit costs, whereas the House version shifted up to 25% of the benefit costs onto states. Benefits have historically been 100% paid for by the federal government.

Republicans in Congress say they want to hold states accountable for billions of dollars spent annually on erroneous payments to participants. Under the bill, the amount each state would have to contribute toward SNAP benefits was based on its payment error rate. States like Michigan, with high error rates (10.7% for 2023), would be responsible for more of the cost.

The maximum 15% level included in the Senate bill would produce a budget gap of around $467.3 million in Michigan, where low-income households are on track to qualify for $3.1 billion in annual SNAP benefits in 2025. If the 15% cost-share also extends to SNAP's summer program for families with school-age children, the cost to the state could hit nearly $482.3 million, according to state data.

States that manage to bring their payment error rates below 6% would not be mandated to pay a share of SNAP costs, according to the Senate text.

"It doesn't kick in until 2028, so it gives the states time to prepare for this and, if they will increase their efficiency, again, it will help you a great deal," Boozman told reporters this month. "A lot of people were concerned about the significant bill to the states with the 5% cost share."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says payment errors are usually unintentional mistakes by a state agency staffer or the SNAP household.

Elizabeth Hertel, director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, has complained about the proposal to index the cost-share to a state's error rate because states are punished in part for errors made by household members when filling out applications or other paperwork – errors that MDHHS can't control.

"I think Michigan is in a really good spot with our error rate. We've been working really hard to bring that down, and I think that we'll be successful in seeing a reduction in that," Hertel told The Detroit News earlier this month.

States would also take on a larger chunk of the cost of running the program under both the House and Senate versions of the budget legislation — 75% of administrative costs. That would mean an estimated $95 million in additional costs for Michigan to operate the program, according to the state Department of Health and Human Services.

Kentucky man charged with DUI in ATV crash that killed his 7-year-old nephew

BY CHRISTOPHER LEACH
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A Kentucky man is accused of driving an all-terrain vehicle while drunk, causing a crash that killed his 7-year-old nephew, according to Kentucky State Police and court documents.

The crash happened Saturday around 10:50 p.m. near River Street in Lewis County, about 90 miles southeast of Cincinnati. State police said 39-year-old Adam Thacker, of Vanceburg, drove off the road and flipped an ATV.

Thacker's nephew was ejected from the ATV and suffered serious injuries. He was taken to Meadow View Hospital and later pronounced dead by medical staff, police said.

Police interviewed Thacker after the crash, and he admitted to drinking five to six beers and Fireball Cinnamon Whisky over five hours, according to court documents.

The officer saw six empty beer cans and three small bottles of Fireball at the scene of the crash.

Thacker told police he was a two or three on a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of how intoxicated he was, according to court documents. Thacker added he was at a six when he drank 12 beers the week prior.

He also told police he was driving between 25 and 30 mph when the wreck happened, according to court documents. There were multiple "no ATV" signs in the area of the crash.

Thacker failed multiple field sobriety tests at the scene, according to court documents. He consented to a blood test at the hospital.

Thacker was charged with vehicular homicide while under the influence of alcohol, DUI and second-degree criminal trespassing. State police are investigating the crash.

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