



# Advisory

To: Manufacturers, Distributors and  
Dealers of Neighborhood Electric  
Vehicles and Electric Golf Carts

Number 369

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## ENFORCEMENT OF VEHICLE CERTIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND ELECTRIC GOLF CARTS

The purpose of this advisory is to remind manufacturers and dealers that neighborhood electric vehicles (NEV) and electric golf carts (eGC) must be certified by the Air Resources Board (ARB) before being advertised, offered for sale, and/or sold in California. Enforcement of non-California certified electric vehicles is ongoing, and penalties of up to \$5,000 per vehicle per violation<sup>1</sup> can be imposed. Sellers must ensure electric vehicles advertised or sold for use in California comply with ARB certification requirements.

### CERTIFICATION

ARB certification of electric golf carts is required as a result of rulemaking introduced in 1994 that set emissions standards for off-highway recreation vehicles (OHRV). As a result, to be legal for use in non-attainment areas,<sup>2</sup> golf carts manufactured on or after January 1, 1997, must have zero emissions. Certification of NEVs is required by ARB's Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Regulation (ZEV website link provided below).

ARB certification is required for all NEV and eGC models intended for sale or use in California, and this certification must be obtained for each applicable model year. Vehicles intended for California on-road use as an NEV, whether as a standard or optional configuration, must be certified by ARB.

Certification not only verifies that NEVs and eGCs are true zero emission vehicles, but also ensures they meet certain consumer safety, performance, and product standards.<sup>3</sup> Enforcement against the sales of non-California certified vehicles ensures that a level playing field exists for manufacturers and dealers that have taken the time and necessary steps to comply with the law and obtain ARB certification.

### DEFINITIONS

To avoid penalties, vehicles must be ARB certified to their proper categories. Manufacturers must apply for certification with the ARB Emissions Compliance, Automotive Regulations and Science (ECARS) Division. Once certified, ARB will issue an Executive Order (EO) for either a (1) New Zero-emission Vehicle, Passenger Car or Light-Duty Truck (for NEVs), or (2) a New Pure Electric Golf Cart (for eGCs). Multiple models of a manufacturer's NEV or eGC vehicles may be listed on the same EO.

Golf Cart: California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 13, section 2411, defines a golf cart as "a vehicle used to convey equipment and no more than two persons, including the driver, to play the game of golf in an area designated as a golf course. Golf carts are designed to have an unladen weight of less than 1,300 pounds and carry not more than 100 pounds, excluding passengers, accessories and optional

<sup>1</sup> California Health and Safety Code section 43154 - <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=hsc&group=43001-44000&file=43150-43156>

<sup>2</sup> In this case, the referenced non-attainment areas are those California areas that do not attain the federal ozone standards: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/desig/adm/adm.htm>

<sup>3</sup> In addition, California Vehicle Code section 21253 requires that all on-highway vehicles meet safety standards in order to be registered for use on public roadways in California. This requirement applies to all NEV vehicles, including "golf cart" style vehicles and other small electric cars. <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/vctop/d11/vc21253.htm>

equipment. A golf cart is not used for grounds keeping or maintenance purposes.” Additionally, golf carts may not be modified for California on-road registration purposes as an NEV.<sup>4</sup>

**NEV:** CCR, Title 13, section 1962.1, defines an NEV as “a motor vehicle<sup>5</sup> that meets the definition of Low-Speed Vehicle either in section 385.5 of the Vehicle Code<sup>6</sup> or in 49 CFR 571.500<sup>7</sup> (as it existed on July 1, 2000), and is certified to zero-emission vehicle standards.” NEVs can attain a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour.

Table 1: NEV and (Electric) Golf Cart Definitions

	NEV Category	Golf Cart Category
<b>Weight:</b>	<3,000 lbs., GVWR	<1,300 lbs., unladen weight
<b>Occupants:</b>	Determined by seating and load capacity	Cannot carry more than two occupants, including driver
<b>Golf Equipment:</b>	Not required to carry golf equipment	Designed to carry golf equipment
<b>VIN Required:</b>	Yes	No
<b>Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard</b>	Must meet FMVSS No. 500, 49 CFR 571.500 (See footnote #5 below.)	Not required to meet FMVSS
<b>Certified as:</b>	New Zero-emission Vehicle, Passenger Car (PC) or Light-Duty Truck (LDT)	New Pure Electric Golf Cart (eGC)

**CONTACTS**

If you have questions regarding the ARB certification process, please contact the appropriate ARB certification staff by visiting the ARB On-Road New Vehicle & Engine Certification Program website: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onroad/cert/cert.php>

For information regarding the enforcement of uncertified NEVs and electric golf carts, please contact Ms. Leisa Bush at (916) 323-5041 or via e-mail at [lbush@arb.ca.gov](mailto:lbush@arb.ca.gov).

**WEBSITE LINKS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Certification of new on-road vehicles, engines : <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onroad/cert/cert.php>
- DMV NEV/Golf Cart Facts: [http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast\\_facts/ffvr37.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast_facts/ffvr37.htm)
- Zero Emission Vehicle Program: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/zevprog/zevprog.htm>
- Previous Enforcement Advisories:
  - Gasoline Powered Golf Carts* - <http://www.arb.ca.gov/enf/advs/adv305.pdf>
  - Golf Cart Limitations and Restrictions* - <http://www.arb.ca.gov/enf/advs/advs410.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> California Department of Motor Vehicles - [http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast\\_facts/ffvr37.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast_facts/ffvr37.htm)  
<sup>5</sup> Low-speed vehicles are treated as motor vehicles under Federal law and must comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards as outlined in 49 CFR 571.500 -<http://www.nhtsa.gov/cars/rules/rulings/lsv/lsv.html>  
<sup>6</sup> California Vehicle Code section 385.5 - [http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/vctop/d01/vc385\\_5.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/vctop/d01/vc385_5.htm)  
<sup>7</sup> 49 CFR 571.500, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, Standard No. 500; low-speed vehicles - <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title49-vol6/pdf/CFR-2011-title49-vol6-sec571-500.pdf>