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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL CODE PROVISIONS

Introduced By: Representatives Shanley, Vella-Wilkinson, Barros, Casey, Place, Filippi, Casimiro, Chippendale, and Newberry

Date Introduced: March 03, 2021

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 31-1-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-1 entitled "Definitions and
2 General Code Provisions" is 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 previously
8 mentioned activities, but may not be used primarily for the transportation of passengers or goods
9 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 this
12 and other states, and may, in addition to the registration plate, retain the designation "antique" and
13 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. The year of manufacture plate, as
18 authorized by this subsection, need only be attached to the rear of the vehicle.

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

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

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

20 (d) "Automobile" means, for registration purposes, every motor vehicle carrying
21 passengers other than for hire, including any motor vehicle, commonly known as a pick-up truck,
22 having a gross weight of eight thousand eight hundred pounds (8,800 lbs.) or less.

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

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

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

34 (h) "Electric personal assistive mobility device" ("EPAMD") is a self-balancing, non-

1 tandem two-wheeled (2) device, designed to transport only one person, with an electric propulsion
2 system that limits the maximum speed of the device to fifteen (15) miles per hour.

3 (i) "Fifth-wheel trailer": A towable recreational vehicle, not exceeding four hundred (400)
4 square feet in area, designed to be towed by a motorized vehicle that contains a towing mechanism
5 that is mounted above or forward of the tow vehicle's rear axle and that is eligible to be registered
6 for highway use.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 (u) "Natural gas vehicle" means a vehicle operated by an engine fueled primarily by natural
13 gas.

14 (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; and
16 (2) Certified by the manufacturer as complying with ANSI A119.5.

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

21 (x) "Pedal carriage" (also known as "quadricycles") means a nonmotorized bicycle with
22 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 to
24 the pedal carriage. The term shall not include a bicycle with trainer or beginner wheels affixed to
25 it, nor shall it include a wheelchair or other vehicle with the purpose of operation by or for the
26 transportation of a person with a disability, 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) "Pick-up camper": A camping recreational vehicle consisting of a roof, floor, and sides
29 designed to be loaded onto and unloaded from the back of a pick-up truck.

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

1 include a wheelchair or other vehicle with the purpose of operation by or for the transportation of
2 a person with a disability.

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

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

11 (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 (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 (ee) "Travel trailer": A towable recreational vehicle, not exceeding three hundred twenty
17 square feet (320 sq. ft.) 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 for
19 highway use.

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

23 SECTION 2. Section 31-1-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-1 entitled "Definitions and
24 General Code Provisions" is hereby amended to read as follows:

25 **31-1-4. Trucks and tractors.**

26 (a) "Covered heavy-duty tow and recovery vehicle" means a vehicle that is transporting a
27 disabled vehicle from the place where the vehicle became disabled to the nearest appropriate repair
28 facility; and, provided the vehicle has a gross vehicle weight that is equal to or exceeds the gross
29 vehicle weight of the disabled vehicle being transported.

30 (b) "Farm tractor" means every motor vehicle designed and used primarily as a farm
31 implement, for drawing plows, mowing machines, and other implements of husbandry or farm
32 vehicles.

33 (c) "Tow cars and tow trucks" means every motor vehicle ordinarily used for the purpose
34 of towing or removing motor vehicles or assisting disabled motor vehicles.

1 (d)(1) "Trailer transporter towing unit" means a power unit that is not used to carry property
2 when operating in a towaway trailer transporter combination.

3 (2) "Towaway trailer transporter combination" means a combination of vehicles consisting
4 of a trailer transporter towing unit and two (2) trailers or semitrailers:

5 (i) With a total weight that does not exceed twenty-six thousand pounds (26,000 lbs.); and

6 (ii) In which the trailers or semitrailers carry no property and constitute inventory property
7 of a manufacturer, distributor, or dealer of the trailers or semitrailers.

8 (e) "Truck" means every motor vehicle designed, used, or maintained primarily for the
9 transportation of property. The administrator of the division of motor vehicles shall determine, in
10 case of doubt, if a motor vehicle is subject to registration as a truck; provided, however, that any
11 motor vehicle commonly known as a pick-up truck, eligible for registration as a commercial vehicle
12 and having a gross weight of eight thousand eight hundred pounds (8,800 lbs.) or less, may be
13 designated and registered as a passenger vehicle, commercial vehicle or designated as
14 "combination" upon application and proper form furnished by the administrator of the division of
15 motor vehicles to applicants. The combination plates and/or the passenger plates will allow those
16 vehicles to be driven for commercial and pleasure purposes.

17 (f) "Truck tractor" means a non-cargo-carrying power unit that operates in combination
18 with a semi-trailer or trailer, except that a truck tractor and a semi-trailer or trailer engaged in the
19 transportation of automobiles may transport motor vehicles on part of the power unit.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL CODE
PROVISIONS

1 This act would amend the definition of automobiles to include pick-up trucks weighing
2 eight thousand eight hundred pounds (8,800 lbs.) and permit them to be registered as passenger
3 vehicles.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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