

2018 -- S 2971

LC005888

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES - COMMERCIAL LOW SPEED  
VEHICLES

Introduced By: Senator Louis P. DiPalma

Date Introduced: June 14, 2018

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(by request)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 31 of the General Laws entitled "MOTOR AND OTHER  
2 VEHICLES" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 19.5

4 CITY OF NEWPORT - COMMERCIAL LOW SPEED VEHICLES

5 **31-19.5-1. City of Newport - Commercial low speed vehicles.**

6 (a) For the purposes of this chapter, a commercial low speed vehicle means a self-  
7 propelled, electrically or gas powered motor vehicle which: is designed to carry eight (8) or fewer  
8 persons; is designed to be, and is, operated at speeds of twenty-five (25) miles per hour or less;  
9 and conforms to the maximum safety equipment requirements as adopted in the Federal Motor  
10 Vehicle Safety Standard No. 500, Low Speed vehicles (49 C.F.R. 571.500). Notwithstanding  
11 anything to the contrary, a low speed vehicle may be operated upon the roadways of the city of  
12 Newport as a commercial jitney service only if it meets the requirements of this section.

13 (b) Each person operating a commercial low speed vehicle on a roadway of the city of  
14 Newport shall possess a valid driver's license issued pursuant to § 31-10-1 and be at least twenty  
15 (20) years old.

16 (c) Any person operating a commercial low speed vehicle shall first obtain a certificate of  
17 necessity from the Rhode Island public utilities commission.

18 (d) Every operator of a commercial low speed vehicle shall maintain financial

1 responsibility on such low speed vehicle if the low speed vehicle is to be operated upon the  
2 roadways of the city of Newport.

3 (e) Every person operating a commercial low speed vehicle shall be granted all the rights  
4 and shall be subject to all duties applicable to the driver of any motor vehicle except as to the  
5 special regulations in this section and except as to those provisions which by their nature can have  
6 no application.

7 (f) The operator of a commercial low speed vehicle shall observe all traffic laws and local  
8 ordinances regarding the rules of the road. A low speed vehicle shall not be operated on a street  
9 or a highway with a posted speed limit greater than twenty-five (25) miles per hour. The  
10 provisions of this subsection shall not prohibit a low speed vehicle from crossing a street or  
11 highway with a posted speed limit greater than thirty-five (35) miles per hour.

12 (g) No person shall operate a commercial low speed vehicle:

13 (1) In any careless way as to endanger the person or property of another; or

14 (2) While under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance. Low speed vehicles  
15 shall be manufactured and comply with the standards of the National Traffic Safety  
16 Administration Standards for low speed vehicles as set out in 49 C.F.R. 571.500, as amended.

17 (h) A commercial low speed vehicle shall only be operated during the hours of 6:00 am  
18 through 12:00 am.

19 (i) Safety inspections. Electrically powered commercial low speed vehicles shall be  
20 exempt from Rhode Island's vehicle inspection program and emissions testing. Upon registration  
21 and renewal of a low speed vehicle's registration, the owner shall certify, under penalty of  
22 perjury, that all lights, tires, seat belts and other vehicle equipment are in good working condition.

23 (j) Title and registration. The division of motor vehicles shall issue a title and jitney  
24 registration for a commercial low speed vehicle upon submission of a certificate from the  
25 manufacturer that the low speed vehicle meets the safety standards of the National Traffic Safety  
26 Administration Standards for low speed vehicles as set out in 49 C.F.R. 571.500, as amended.

27 SECTION 2. 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 - COMMERCIAL LOW SPEED  
VEHICLES

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- 1           This act would authorize commercial low speed vehicles of eight (8) or fewer persons to
- 2 operate on the roadways of the city of Newport as a commercial jitney service.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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