

State of Michigan
County of Mason
Township of Branch

ORV ORDINANCE

An ordinance authorizing and regulating the operation of Off Road Vehicles (ORVs) on county primary and county local roads in Branch Township, Mason County, providing penalties for the violation thereof, and for the distribution of fines and costs resulting from those penalties pursuant to 2008 PA 240, MCL 324.81131.

THE TOWNSHIP OF BRANCH ORDAINS:

1. DEFINITIONS

- a. "Township" means the township of Branch, Mason County.
- b. "County" means Mason County, Michigan.
- c. "Driver license" means an operator's or chauffeur's license or permit issued to an individual by the Secretary of State under Chapter III of the Michigan Vehicle Code, 1949 PA 300, MCL 257.301 to 257.329, for that individual to operate a vehicle, whether or not conditions are attached to the license or permit.
- d. "Maintained portion" means that portion of a road improved, designated or ordinarily used for vehicular traffic, including the gravel shoulder or paved shoulder of the road.
- e. "Operate" means to ride in or on, and be in actual physical control of the operation of an ORV.
- f. "Operator" means a person who operates or is in actual physical control of the operation of an ORV.
- g. "ORV" means a motor driven off road recreation vehicle capable of cross-country travel without benefit of a road or trail, on or immediately over land, snow, ice, marsh, swampland or other natural terrain.

ORV or vehicle includes, but is not limited to, a multi-track or multi-wheel drive vehicle, an ATV, a motorcycle or related 2-wheel, 3-wheel, or 4-wheel, an amphibious machine. A ground effect air cushion vehicle, or other means of transportation deriving motive power from a source other than muscle or wind.

ORV or vehicle does not include a registered snowmobile, a farm vehicle being used for farming, a vehicle used for military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement purposes, a vehicle owned and operated by a utility company or an oil or gas

company when performing maintenance on its facilities or on property over which it has an easement, a construction or logging vehicle used in performance on its common function, or a registered aircraft.

- h. "Road" means a County primary road or county local road as described in section 5 of 1951 PA 51, MCI247.655
- i. "Road Commission" means the Board of County Road Commissioners for the County of Mason.
- j. "Safety Certificate" means a certificate issued pursuant to 1994 PA 451 as amended, MCI 324.81129, or a comparable ORV safety certificate issued under the authority of another state or a province of Canada. All children who are twelve years of age and up, that do not have a driver's license, must obtain this certification.
- k. "Visual Supervision" means direct observation of the operator with unaided or the normally corrected eye, where the observer is able to come to the immediate aid of the operator.
- l. "Township Board" means the Township Board of Branch Township.

2. OPERATION OF ORVs

An individual may operate an ORV on a Road within the Township provided that the ORV is operated only with the flow of traffic, on the far right of the maintained portion of the Road, subject to the following regulations.

- a. A person shall not operate an ORV 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 Road.
- b. ORVs shall travel single file, except when passing or being passed by another ORV.
- c. All ORVs operating must have a lighted headlight and taillight.
- d. Unless a person possesses a Driver's License, a person shall not operate an ORV on a Road if the ORV is registered as a motor vehicle under the Michigan Vehicle Code and the ORV is either more than 60 inches wide or has three wheels.
- e. A person under the age of 12 shall not operate an ORV on a Road.
- f. A person under the age of 18 shall not operate an ORV on a Road unless the person is in possession of a valid Driver's License or is under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian and the person has in his possession an ORV Safety Certificate issued by Michigan, another state, or a province of Canada.
- g. All operators must, upon demand by a law enforcement officer, present either an ORV Safety Certificate or Driver's License.
- h. An owner or person in charge of an ORV shall not allow an ORV to be operated by an individual who is incompetent to operate a vehicle because of mental or physical disability.
- i. A child less than 16 years of age shall not operate a 3-wheeled ATV.
- j. A person shall not operate an ORV at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper, or in a careless manner having undue regard for conditions.

- k. A person shall not operate or ride on an ORV unless they are wearing on their head a helmet and protective eyewear approved by the United States Department of Transportation. This section does not apply if the vehicle is equipped with a roof that meets or exceeds the standards for a crash helmet and the operator and each passenger is wearing a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt.
- l. A person shall not operate an ORV without a braking system.
- m. A person shall not operate an ORV during the hours of ½ hour after sunset and ½ hour before sunrise without a working brake light that is brighter than the taillight.
- n. All ORVs shall conform to the noise emission levels established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under the Noise Control Act of 1972, 42 USC 4901 to 4918.
- o. No person shall transport a passenger on an ORV unless the manufacturing standards for the vehicle make provisions for transporting passengers.
- p. No person shall operate an ORV with an opened container of alcohol, unless it is in a trunk, separate compartment, or is encased or enclosed.
- q. No person shall operate an ORV unless it is equipped with a throttle so designed that when the pressure used to advance the throttle is removed, the engine speed will immediately and automatically return to idle.
- r. No person shall operate an ORV unless it is equipped with a spark arrester type United States Forest Service approved muffler in good working order and in constant operation.
- s. An ORV shall otherwise be operated in full compliance with all applicable provisions of state law, including, but not limited to, Part 811 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, MCI 324.81101, et seq.
- t. An ORV shall not be operated on the road surface, roadway, shoulder, or right-of-way of US10.

3. NO TOWNSHIP DUTY TO MAINTAIN COUNTY ROADS

Despite the terms of the Ordinance allowing ORVs to use portions of County Roads, the Township has no duty to, and undertakes no duty to, maintain a Road within its boundaries in a condition reasonably safe and convenient for the operation of ORVs.

- a. A violation of this ordinance is a municipal civil infraction, and a responsible person shall pay a fine of not more than \$500.00. In addition a court may order the defendant to pay the cost of repairing any damage to the environment, a road, or public property damaged as a result of the violation.
- b. The Township Treasurer shall deposit fines and damage costs collected under this ordinance and under applicable provisions of the Revised Judicature Act, MCL 600.8379, into a fund designated as the "ORV FUND".
- c. The Township Board shall appropriate revenue in the ORV fund as follows:

1. Fifty percent to the Township ORV fund to be distributed to the Mason County Sheriff's Department or to be distributed to a Township fund to cover the costs of the Township Constable, or to both, responsible for ORV enforcement and training.
2. Fifty percent to the Mason County Road Commission for repairing damage to roads or streets and the environment that may have been caused by ORVs and for posting signs indicating ORV speed limits or indicating whether roads or streets are open or closed to the operation of ORVs under the ordinance within Branch Township.

Effective Date: This ordinance shall be effective 30 days after its first publication. (12-01-2012 WAS PUBLICATION)

This ordinance will be reviewed at a Branch Township meeting every year thereafter to determine its continuance. This ordinance will be reviewed 30 days but not less than 10 days prior to the expiration of the ordinance. This ordinance pertains only to County Roads and does not apply to private Forest Service or DNR Roads and trails.

Branch Township reserves the right to open or close roads when and if necessary.

This ordinance is adopted by action of the Branch Township Board this 8th day of November, 2012.



 Michael Shoup, Supervisor



 Clerk Shirley Brayton



 Treasurer Ralph Razminas



 Trustee Robert Ohse



 Trustee Robin Masselink