



Canada: Zero-Emission, Low-Speed Vehicle Legislation

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Background

The purpose of this document is to highlight a recent Canadian update to federal regulation concerning low-speed vehicles (LSVs). Originally designed for short-distance, community travel, LSVs are powered electrically and do not use fuel as an on-board source of energy. LSVs were first established as a separate class of vehicles in Canada in 2000. The original Canadian classification of LSVs excluded trucks from its definition.

Overview

On August 6, 2008, the Canadian Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities announced an update of the federal regulation regarding LSVs. The update includes an expanded definition of LSVs to include trucks (vehicles with extended flatbeds used for the transport of larger items). This amendment will enable manufacturers of small LSV trucks to market and sell their products in the Canada. The updated regulation closely aligns Canada's policies with those in the United States. Furthermore, LSV truck manufacturers will now be able to produce an equal version for both markets without modification.

LSV trucks are designed and utilized as grounds keeping, landscaping and work vehicles in controlled environments. These environments include campuses, airports, resorts, and parks. Due to their lower safety standards and speeds, LSV road use is highly restricted, and they are not currently permitted on Canadian highways, with the exception of Quebec and British Columbia where they are currently being tested. In Canada, roadway regulation of LSVs falls under the purview of provincial officials.

Quebec

Quebec's Transport Minister, Julie Boulet, announced on June 17, 2008 a pilot project that will allow LSVs on roads with speed limits up to 50km/h. The pilot project, set for three years, will enable authorities to develop laws and equipment for LSVs in order to increase their use over time.

British Columbia

On June 6, 2008, British Columbia enacted new regulations regarding the use of LSVs on provincial highways, municipal roadways, and rural roads. The new regulations allow for the operation of LSVs on provincial highways with speed limits of 40km/h or less, and give full power to the municipality concerning roads with a speed limit of 50km/h or less. In rural areas with speed limits under 50km/h, a permit authorizing the use of LSVs is required from the Minister of Transportation of British Columbia.

In addition, Ontario, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island are all currently considering the viability of LSVs on public (non-highway) roads.

Market Entry

Under the new regulations, U.S.-based manufacturers of LSV trucks may now market and sell LSVs in Canada. Market opportunities in regulated areas will exist with public institutions and government organizations with small vehicle needs for landscaping, general maintenance and grounds keeping purposes. LSV manufacturers will want to stay abreast of changes in legislation on the provincial level by visiting their respective Transportation websites.

Information Sources

Transport Canada - <http://www.tc.gc.ca/en/menu.htm>
Canada Gazette - <http://canadagazette.gc.ca/index-e.html>

For More Information

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