

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 258 (SB 91)

2019 Regular Session

Cortez

New law authorizes electric low-speed scooters to operate on sidewalks, bicycle paths, and highways, except when the DOTD or any parish or municipal governing authority with jurisdiction limits, or both, prohibits scooter operation in the interest of safety.

New law authorizes a parish or municipal governing authority to reasonably regulate and assess penalties for moving or parking violations applicable to the operator of an electric low-speed scooter on any sidewalk, bicycle path, or highway under its jurisdiction.

New law defines an "electric low-speed scooter" as a rental or commercial scooter weighing less than 100 pounds that has handlebars and an electric motor, is solely powered by an electric motor or human power, and has a maximum speed of not more than 20 miles per hour on a paved level surface when powered solely by an electric motor. New law provides that an electric low-speed scooter shall not be considered a motor-driven cycle, a vehicle, or a motor vehicle.

New law provides that a scooter shall carry only the number of persons at one time it is designed and equipped to carry.

New law prohibits a person operating a scooter to attach himself or the scooter to any other vehicle being operated upon the highway.

New law prohibits a person operating a scooter upon a roadway from carrying a package, bundle, or article that prevents him from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars.

New law requires every person operating an electric low-speed scooter upon a roadway to ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable, exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or a vehicle proceeding in the same direction, except under any of the following circumstances:

- (1) When overtaking and passing another electric low-speed scooter, bicycle, or vehicle proceeding in the same direction.
- (2) When preparing to turn or turning left at an intersection, or into a private road or driveway.
- (3) When reasonably necessary to avoid fixed or moving objects, vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards, or substandard width lanes, or any other condition that makes it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway. For purposes of this provision, a "substandard width lane" is a lane that is too narrow for an electric low-speed scooter and another electric low-speed scooter, bicycle, or a vehicle to travel safely side-by-side within the lane.

New law requires the operator of a motor vehicle, when overtaking and passing an electric low-speed scooter proceeding in the same direction on the roadway, to exercise due care when the motor vehicle is passing the electric low-speed scooter, and to leave a safe distance between the motor vehicle and the electric low-speed scooter of not less than three feet, and to maintain such safe distance until safely past the overtaken electric low-speed scooter. New law allows the operator of a motor vehicle to pass an electric low-speed scooter traveling in the same direction in a no-passing zone only when it is safe to do so.

New law requires a scooter to be equipped with a brake that enables its braked wheels to skid on dry, level, and clean pavements.

New law requires every person operating an electric low-speed scooter upon a La. highway be granted all of the rights and be subject to all the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle in accordance with prior law, except as limited or prohibited by DOTD or any parish or municipal governing authority, and except as to those provisions of prior law which by their very nature can have no application.

New law requires a scooter to be equipped with appropriate lights, reflectors, or reflective markings when in use during times specified in R.S. 32:301, as follows:

- (1) At any time between sunset and sunrise.
- (2) When, due to insufficient light or unfavorable atmospheric conditions, persons and vehicles on the highway are not clearly discernable at a distance of 500 feet ahead.
- (3) When moisture in the air or precipitation necessitates the continuous use of windshield wipers.
- (4) While driving in a tunnel.

New law requires the operator of an electric low-speed scooter under the age of 17 years to wear an approved helmet as provided in R.S. 32:199.

Effective July 1, 2019.

(Adds R.S. 32:300.1.1)