

Safety Standards for Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs)



This document outlines the safety standards for low-speed vehicles (LSVs) at the University of California San Diego. These standards ensure compliance with state and federal regulations while maintaining a safe campus environment for all students, faculty, staff and visitors. A low-speed vehicle is also known as a neighborhood electric vehicle (NEV). Golf carts are not typically LSVs even though the term is commonly used interchangeably.

Definition of Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs)

1. Has four wheels
2. Can attain a speed of more than 20 miles per hour but not more than 25 miles per hour on a paved level surface
3. Has a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of less than 3,000 pounds
4. Is manufactured to be street legal on public roads, meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements set in FMVSS 500
5. Display a valid Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)
6. Is registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

Minimum safety standards for LSVs as stated in Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS 500)

- Headlights and taillights
- Turn signals and brake lights

- Mirrors: Rearview and side mirrors
- Seat belts: Lap belts acceptable, 3-point preferred
- DOT-rated windshield and wipers
- Reflectors on all four sides
- Maximum speed limited to 25 mph

University of California San Diego requirements

In addition to industry LSV standards, the University of California San Diego requires campus-specific safety features in an effort to create a safer campus environment. If these additional features are not offered by manufacturer upon purchasing the LSV, Fleet Services will install before the LSV enters service. These include:

- Amber beacons: Roof mounted with 360 degrees visibility; must remain on during motion
- Hard/Solid doors: Providing additional protection to the drivers and passengers from ejection and impact injuries
- Sealed batteries: To prevent acid spills
- Audible back up alarm: Activated when vehicle is reversing
- Rear white lights: To visibly show vehicle is backing up/reversing

Reference List

California Vehicle Code § 385.5 – Definition of Low-Speed Vehicle

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards TP-500-02

SAE J2358-2022 - Low-Speed Vehicles

UC San Diego Policy 551-6 – Use of Service Vehicles

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Low-Speed Vehicles FMVSS500)