

Senate Bill 37

By: Senators Thompson of the 33rd, Johnson of the 1st, Hooks of the 14th and Clay of the 37th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to motor vehicles and
2 traffic, so as to regulate the use of electric personal assistive mobility devices; to define
3 certain terms; to change certain provisions relating to powers of local authorities generally;
4 to provide for certain equipment requirements for garbage trucks or sanitation trucks; to
5 provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and
6 for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to motor vehicles and traffic, is
10 amended in Code Section 40-1-1, relating to definitions, by inserting a new paragraph (15.6)
11 to read as follows:

12 "(15.6) 'Electric personal assistive mobility device' or 'EPAMD' means a self-balancing,
13 two nontandem wheeled device designed to transport only one person and having an
14 electric propulsion system with average power of 750 watts (1 horsepower) and a
15 maximum speed of less than 20 miles per hour on a paved level surface when powered
16 solely by such propulsion system and ridden by an operator who weighs 170 pounds."

17 **SECTION 2.**

18 Said title is further amended in said Code Section 40-1-1 by striking paragraph (33) and
19 inserting in lieu thereof the following:

20 "(33) 'Motor vehicle' means every vehicle which is self-propelled other than an electric
21 personal assistive mobility device (EPAMD)."

22 **SECTION 3.**

23 Said title is further amended in Article 13 of Chapter 6, relating to special provisions for
24 certain vehicles, by adding a new Part 2A to read as follows:

"Part 2A

1
2 40-6-320.

3 (a) Electric personal assistive mobility devices may be operated on highways and on
4 sidewalks where a 48 inch clear path is maintained for access for persons with disabilities,
5 provided that any person operating such a device shall have the same rights and duties as
6 prescribed for pedestrians in Article 5 of this chapter and except as otherwise provided in
7 this part.

8 (b) No person shall operate any electric personal assistive mobility device on the roadway
9 of any highway unless:

10 (1) The maximum speed limit of the roadway is 35 miles per hour or less; or

11 (2) The roadway has a separately striped bicycle lane and the device is operated within
12 the bicycle lane.

13 (c) When traveling in any roadway of a highway, any person operating an electric personal
14 assistive mobility device shall travel in the same direction authorized for motor vehicle
15 traffic on such roadway.

16 40-6-321.

17 Any person operating an electric personal assistive mobility device on a sidewalk or
18 roadway shall comply with the requirements of this part or any local ordinance regulating
19 the use of such devices pursuant to Code Section 40-6-371 and shall exercise due care to
20 avoid colliding with, and shall yield the right of way to, persons traveling on foot.

21 40-6-322.

22 No person shall operate an electric personal assistive mobility device at a speed greater
23 than seven miles per hour when traveling on any sidewalk or 15 miles per hour elsewhere;
24 provided, however, that a county or municipal governing authority or the commissioner of
25 transportation may further restrict the speed of such devices in locations where pedestrian
26 traffic is congested and there is a significant speed differential between pedestrians and
27 operators of such devices.

28 40-6-323.

29 (a) An electric personal assistive mobility device may be parked on a sidewalk unless
30 otherwise prohibited or restricted by an official traffic control device or local ordinance;
31 provided, however, that in no case shall an electric personal assistive mobility device be
32 parked on any sidewalk in such a manner as to prevent the movement of a wheelchair.

33 (b) An electric personal assistive mobility device shall not be parked on any roadway in
34 such a manner as to prevent the movement of a legally parked motor vehicle.

1 (c) Except as otherwise provided in this Code section, any person operating an electric
2 personal assistive mobility device shall be subject to the same parking restrictions as
3 provided for motor vehicles under Part 1 of Article 10 of this chapter. All violations of
4 parking restrictions shall be deemed the responsibility of the owner of such device; and,
5 for purposes of parking restrictions, the owner shall be deemed to be in control of the
6 device at the time of a parking violation involving such device, and no evidence of actual
7 control by such owner need be proven as an element of the offense.

8 40-6-324.

9 No person shall carry or transport any hazardous materials on an electric personal assistive
10 mobility device. Oxygen carried for personal medical reasons shall not be deemed a
11 hazardous material for purposes of this Code section.

12 40-6-325.

13 (a) Any electric personal assistive mobility device, when operated on any highway or
14 sidewalk, shall be equipped with front, rear, and side reflectors which shall be visible from
15 a distance of 300 feet when directly in front of lawful upper beams of headlights on a motor
16 vehicle; a system that when employed will enable the operator to bring the device to a
17 controlled stop; and, if the device is operated between one-half hour after sunset and
18 one-half hour before sunrise, a lamp emitting a white light which, while the device is in
19 motion, illuminates the area in front of the operator for a distance of 300 feet.

20 (b) Any person of any age operating an electric personal assistive mobility device on any
21 highway or sidewalk shall wear protective headgear which meets or exceeds the impact
22 standards for bicycle helmets required by Code Section 40-6-296.

23 40-6-326.

24 Any person who is under the influence of any intoxicating liquor or any drug to a degree
25 which renders him or her a hazard shall not operate any electric personal assistive mobility
26 device on any highway or sidewalk. Violation of this Code section shall be a misdemeanor,
27 punishable upon conviction by a fine not to exceed \$500.00.

28 40-6-327.

29 Any person who violates any provision of this part other than Code Section 40-6-326 shall
30 not be guilty of a criminal offense or a moving traffic violation for purposes of Code
31 Section 40-5-57 but shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$500.00."

SECTION 4.

Said title is further amended in subsection (a) of Code Section 40-6-371, relating to powers of local authorities generally, by inserting a new paragraph to read as follows:

"(18.1) Regulating the operation of electric personal assistive mobility devices, provided that such regulations are no less restrictive than those imposed by Part 2A of Article 13 of this chapter;"

SECTION 5.

Part 2 of Article 1 of Chapter 8 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to lighting equipment for motor vehicles, is amended by inserting at the end thereof a new Code Section 40-8-36 to read as follows:

"40-8-36.

Any motor vehicle operated as a garbage truck or sanitation truck for the purpose of hauling garbage shall display two amber strobe lights so as to warn approaching travelers to decrease their speed because of the danger of colliding with such truck as it stops and starts along the highway. Such amber lights should be visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of 500 feet from the front and the rear of such truck."

SECTION 6.

This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SECTION 7.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.