

Washington Laws Pertaining to Driving on Shoulders

RCW 46.04.500 Definition of "Roadway"

"Roadway" means that portion of a highway improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, exclusive of the sidewalk or shoulder even though such sidewalk or shoulder is used by persons riding bicycles. In the event a highway includes two or more separated roadways, the term "roadway" shall refer to any such roadway separately but shall not refer to all such roadways collectively.

RCW 46.04.670 Definition of "Vehicle".

"Vehicle" includes every device capable of being moved upon a public highway and in, upon, or by which any persons or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a public highway, including bicycles. The term does not include power wheelchairs or devices other than bicycles moved by human or animal power or used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks. Mopeds shall not be considered vehicles or motor vehicles for the purposes of chapter [46.70](#) RCW. Bicycles shall not be considered vehicles for the purposes of chapter [46.12](#), [46.16](#), or [46.70](#) RCW. Electric personal assistive mobility devices are not considered vehicles or motor vehicles for the purposes of chapter [46.12](#), [46.16](#), [46.29](#), [46.37](#), or [46.70](#) RCW.

RCW 46.61.428 Slow-moving Vehicle Driving on Shoulders, When.

(1) The state department of transportation and local authorities are authorized to determine those portions of any two-lane highways under their respective jurisdictions on which drivers of slow-moving vehicles may safely drive onto improved shoulders for the purpose of allowing overtaking vehicles to pass and may by appropriate signs indicate the beginning and end of such zones.

(2) Where signs are in place to define a driving-on-shoulder zone as set forth in subsection (1) of this section, the driver of a slow-moving vehicle may drive onto and along the shoulder within the zone but only for the purpose of allowing overtaking vehicles to pass and then shall return to the roadway.

(3) Signs erected to define a driving-on-shoulder zone take precedence over pavement markings for the purpose of allowing the movements described in subsection (2) of this section.

RCW 46.61.670 Driving with wheels off roadway.

It shall be unlawful to operate or drive any vehicle or combination of vehicles over or along any pavement or gravel or crushed rock surface on a public highway with one wheel or all of the wheels off the roadway thereof, except as permitted by RCW 46.61.428 or for the purpose of stopping off such roadway, or having stopped thereat, for proceeding back onto the pavement, gravel or crushed rock surface thereof.