

McDougall Law Firm Addresses New Golf Cart Safety Statute Impacting Hilton Head Personal Injury Claims

June 19, 2026

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McDougall Law Firm, LLC announces guidance for Hilton Head Island residents and visitors regarding South Carolina's updated golf cart regulation statute, SC Code § 56-2-90, which took effect May 22, 2025, establishing new safety requirements that significantly impact personal injury claims involving golf cart accidents on the island's extensive cart-accessible road network.

The new statute mandates that all passengers under age 12 wear seatbelts when golf carts operate on public roads, requires operators to hold valid driver's licenses and be at least 16 years old, and necessitates registration and liability insurance for golf carts on public roads. This legislative change responds to documented increases in pediatric golf cart injuries statewide and creates new legal frameworks for injury claims.

Hilton Head Island's unique position as a major tourist destination hosting approximately 2.5 million visitors annually creates distinct personal injury complexities beyond typical suburban accident scenarios. The

seasonal surge of unfamiliar drivers on William Hilton Parkway and Cross Island Parkway, combined with extensive golf cart usage in plantation communities and resort corridors, places the island above national averages for golf cart crash exposure. National data shows more than 156,000 golf cart-related hospitalizations occurred between 2007 and 2017, averaging over 15,000 injuries yearly, with children accounting for approximately 25 percent of serious golf cart injuries according to the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System.

"The May 2025 golf cart statute creates a negligence per se foundation for injury claims involving children under 12 who were not wearing seatbelts, meaning the statutory violation establishes both duty and breach simultaneously, which provides a stronger starting point than general negligence arguments," said J. Olin McDougall, II, Founder of McDougall Law Firm. "Hilton Head's resort economy means a significant percentage of personal injury victims are tourists who don't realize South Carolina's three-year statute of limitations applies to them and who return home before understanding they have viable claims, making prompt legal consultation at the island level the most important step an injured visitor can take."

Beyond golf cart accidents, Hilton Head's resort premises liability encompasses slip and fall incidents at oceanfront hotels and restaurants, pool deck injuries, dock and marina accidents, horseback riding and parasailing incidents, and inadequate property maintenance claims. Each incident type involves distinct theories of property owner liability under South Carolina's modified comparative negligence standard. The island's extensive waterway access generates recreational boating activity resulting in documented boat accident injuries each year, with South Carolina law holding boat operators to the same negligence standards as vehicle drivers.

Personal injury claims arising from collisions, wake injuries, and dock accidents remain subject to South Carolina's three-year statute of limitations under S.C. Code § 15-3-530. As a Hilton Head personal injury lawyer, McDougall Law Firm has recovered more than $100 million for South Carolina injury victims, including results in golf cart accidents, boat accidents, car accidents, motorcycle crashes, and premises liability cases throughout Beaufort County and the Lowcountry.

McDougall Law Firm, LLC is a personal injury law firm based in Beaufort, South Carolina, serving clients throughout Hilton Head Island, Bluffton, Beaufort County, Colleton County, Jasper County, and the South Carolina Lowcountry. Founded by J. Olin McDougall, II, the firm has recovered over $100 million for clients injured in car accidents, golf cart accidents, boat accidents, truck accidents, and other personal injury matters throughout South Carolina. McDougall Law Hilton Head personal injury lawyer services operate on a contingency fee basis, with no upfront costs and free consultations available 24 hours a day.

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McDougall Law Firm, LLC has over 15 years of experience serving Beaufort County personal injury clients.

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