

# Golf Cart Safety

Employees driving around in golf carts are not an unusual sight in today's workplace. In a manufacturing setting, golf carts are used to move people or deliver mail, interoffice supplies, and even tools and equipment. They are also an efficient means of transportation for groundskeepers, maintenance workers, and car dealer sales persons.

Golf carts are involved in a number of accidents each year, resulting in personal injury, death, and property damage. To prevent accidents in the workplace, all employees who operate golf carts must be trained before using the vehicles. This training should include the proper procedures for operating and maintaining golf carts.

## Company Policy

A written statement should describe the company policy regarding the safe use of golf carts. Experience has shown that commitment and active participation by management are necessary to achieve beneficial results. When management demonstrates genuine interest in preventing accidents and providing a safe workplace, supervisors and employees are more likely to do the same.

The first step is to prepare a safety policy statement to develop employee awareness and involvement. You must set a good example and communicate your interest to all employees. To do this, write a short example of safety policy, sign it, and place it in a visible location for all to see and refer to. A sample safety policy could be: "it is the intent of this company to provide a safe place for you to work. Accident and injury prevention is an important part of my job and yours. Working together, we can achieve our goal of safety. Your ideas and safe working practices are important and safety is everyone's responsibility. It is the policy of this company to protect our employees, equipment, facilities, and grounds. Employees operating golf carts must be trained in safe operation of the vehicle, authorized to drive the vehicle, and constantly be aware of others when driving in the workplace".

## Operating a Golf Cart

- Drivers and passengers must remain seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Allow only authorized employees to drive the carts.
- Never exceed the number of available seats for the number of passengers.



- All golf carts should have seat belts, and the operator and all passengers should be restrained.
- Only allow towing by those golf carts originally designed for towing.
- Slow down and honk the horn at all intersections.
- Reduce speed when approaching pedestrians, who always have the right of way.
- Use the safety mirrors at each intersection to ensure pedestrian safety.
- Reduce speed when turning or passing through door ways.
- Do not park carts where they will block emergency equipment, pedestrian aisles, doorways, intersections, or the normal traffic flow.
- The maximum speed of a golf cart depends upon the terrain over which it is being driven, the weather conditions, and the total weight of the golf cart, passengers and any equipment being carried.
- A golf cart should be operated at a speed equivalent to a well-paced walk but no faster than 15 mph.
- Observe all Texas vehicle traffic laws such as lane travel, stop signs, legal passing of other vehicles, etc.
- Drive on streets or roadways whenever possible.
- Only drive on sidewalks when streets and/or parking lots are not available, and then only to the nearest adjacent street or parking lot.
- All passengers should keep hands, arms, legs and feet within the confines of the golf cart at all times when the cart is in motion.
- When the golf cart is not in use, place the golf cart control lever in the "Neutral" position and remove the key.
- When the golf cart is not in use for a long period of time, such as overnight, secure it with a cable and lock or other equivalent locking mechanism.

- Never leave the keys in the golf cart when unattended.
- Never back up without looking to see what is behind the cart.
- Never shift gears while the vehicle is in motion.
- When driving, maintain adequate distance between vehicles.

## Maintaining a Golf Cart

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Inspect each golf cart daily before use. If the golf cart is in need of repairs or maintenance, the vehicle should be taken out of service. Report any damage or maintenance needs to a supervisor immediately.

- Check tires for proper inflation, cuts, or punctures.
- Check that steering is normal.
- Check that forward and reverse gears are operational.
- Check brakes for proper operation.
- Check for any indication of battery fluid leaks such as wet spots under the vehicle.
- Recharge the cart in the designated charging area, parking close to a fire extinguisher.
- Do not recharge near an open flame or source of ignition and do not smoke in recharge station.
- Only an approved battery charger should be used to recharge the batteries (designed to shut off automatically when the batteries are fully charged.)
- Pour baking soda on all spilled battery acid before cleaning up the spill.
- Wash skin thoroughly with cold water if skin is exposed to battery acid.
- Disconnect all battery charger cords before using the golf cart.

## Review Questions

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1. Supervisors are responsible for training employees on safe operation of the golf cart. True or False?
2. Golf carts always have the right-of-way. True or False?
3. How often should the golf cart be inspected?

The Texas Department of Insurance,  
 Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI, DWC)  
 E-mail [resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us](mailto:resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us)  
 or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.

## Answers

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1. True. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that operators have successfully completed golf cart training prior to driving the vehicle.
2. False. Pedestrians always have the right-of-way. If the golf cart is being operated on a sidewalk, the operator should pull off of the sidewalk or stop the vehicle when approaching pedestrians.
3. Inspect the vehicle prior to use (at least daily) using the operator's checklist. Vehicle features to check include proper tire inflation, no cuts or punctures on tires, steering is normal, forward and reverse gears are operational, and brakes work properly.

Remember to practice safety, don't learn it by accident.

This Safety Training Program was published with information from Trinity University and the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI), Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) and is considered factual at development.

## Resources

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The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI, DWC) Resource Center offers a workers' health and safety video tape library. Call (512) 804-4620 for more information or visit our web site at <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/safety/employers.html>.

Disclaimer: Information contained in this training program is considered accurate at time of publication.

*Safety Violations Hotline*  
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