



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

Golf carts are involved in many accidents each year, resulting in personal injury, death, and property damage. There are specific guidelines that should be followed for safe operation of golf carts. Management should have written policies and procedures to manage and maintain equipment, and ensure employees operate the carts in a safe manner.

General Company Safety Policy

A written statement should describe the company policy regarding the safe use of golf carts. Experience has shown that sincere commitment and active participation by management is 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 intent to all employees. To do this, write a safety policy statement, sign it, and place it in a visible location for all to see and reference. A sample safety policy could be:

"It is the intent of this company to provide a safe workplace for everyone. Accident and injury prevention is an important part of our job. Working together, we can achieve our safety goals. Safe working practices are important. 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."

Operational Procedures

Next, list the procedures for safe golf cart operations. Use the examples below as a guide and add your own company specific procedures to meet your needs.

- Golf carts must be operated only by those employees whose duties make it necessary for them to walk significant distances or to move equipment that is difficult or time consuming to move.
- Supervisors are responsible for designating which employees in their departments are authorized to operate golf carts.
- Employees may not operate golf carts until they have been fully trained and authorized.
- Contract employees, trainees, and visitors are prohibited from operating company golf carts.
- Golf carts approved for indoor use must only be used within the facility. Golf carts designated for outdoor use must be used out of doors and may not be used inside the facility.

Operator Training

To prevent workplace accidents, 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 cart and used in conjunction with the golf cart operational manuals.

- All golf cart operators will be trained and authorized prior to using the vehicles.
- Training will include proper procedures for operating and maintaining golf carts.
- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that operators have successfully completed golf cart training prior to driving the vehicle. Employee training documentation will include the trainee's name, title, department, date of training, and supervisor's signature and will be placed in the employee's file.
- Any employee who observes an operator driving in an unsafe manner must report the driver to management.

Golf Cart Safety Procedures

The following are basic rules of operating and maintaining golf carts:

- 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 and passengers and any materials being carried. A golf cart should be operated at a speed equivalent to a well-paced walk but no faster than 15 mph.
- Inspect the vehicle prior to use (at least daily) using the operator's checklist. Vehicle features to check include: tire inflation, cuts or punctures on tires, steering, forward and reverse gears, and brakes.
- If the golf cart needs repair or maintenance, the unit should be taken out of service.
- Golf cart operators will observe all Texas vehicle traffic laws such as lane travel, stop signs, legal passing of other vehicles, etc.
- Golf carts should be operated on streets or roadways whenever possible.
- Sidewalks should be used only where streets and/or parking lots are not available, and then only to the nearest adjacent street or parking lot.
- Golf cart operators must slow down and honk the horn at all intersections.
- Golf cart operators must use the safety mirrors at each intersection to ensure pedestrian safety.
- Golf cart operators will reduce speed when turning or passing through doorways.
- Operating a golf cart on a sidewalk is permissible for employees having to transport equipment to or from a worksite, but then only from the nearest street.
- Most golf carts used are designed to carry a driver and one passenger. A golf cart should not be operated with more passengers than it is designed to carry.
- All golf carts should have seat belts for the operator and each passenger, and each person riding in the golf cart should be restrained by a safety belt.
- Drivers and passengers must remain seated while the vehicle is moving.
- All occupants in the golf cart should keep hands, arms, legs, and feet within the confines of the golf cart at all times when the cart is in motion.
- Pedestrians always have the right-of-way. If the golf cart is being operated on a sidewalk, the

operator should pull off the sidewalk or stop the unit when approaching pedestrians.

- Towing is allowed on those golf carts originally designed for towing.
- When the golf cart is not in use, the operator will place the golf cart control lever in the "Neutral" position and remove the key.
- Golf carts must never be parked where they will block emergency equipment, pedestrian aisles, doorways, intersections, or the normal traffic flow.
- When the golf cart is not being used, the unit should be secured with a cable and lock or other equivalent locking mechanism.
- Report any accident or damage to your supervisor immediately.

Battery Recharge

When recharging golf cart batteries, the following safety rules should be observed:

- Only use an approved battery charger to recharge the batteries (designed to shut off automatically when the batteries are fully charged).
- Do not smoke near the recharge station.
- Do not recharge near an open flame or source of ignition.
- Pour baking soda on 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.

Refueling Equipment

- Shut off engine and let it cool first.
- Remove the fuel cap slowly and hold it at the semi-locked position until pressure is released.
- Allow the nozzle to empty by keeping it in the filler opening for several seconds after shutting off the fuel flow.
- Replace the fuel cap after checking to see that the venting is not clogged.
- Store fuel in UL listed and fire marshal approved Type 11 safety cans.
- Maintain fire extinguishers and other firefighting equipment nearby.
- If fuel spills on equipment, wipe up and allow any residue to dry before starting the engine.
- Do not run if your clothing catches fire. Stop, drop and roll. Apply a blanket or use a fire extinguisher on a coworker who catches fire.

Review

1. Supervisors are responsible for training employees on safe operation of the golf cart.
True/False
2. Golf carts always have the right-of-way.
True/False
3. How often should the golf cart be inspected?
 - a. Every few months
 - b. Prior to use / daily
 - c. When you feel like it

Answers

1. True. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that operators have successfully completed electric 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 golf cart when approaching pedestrians.
3. B

For more information on safety topics see the Service Lloyds website. In Risk Control's Training Materials section, we have additional resources including:

- Vehicle Battery Safety – Toolbox Talk
- Gasoline Safety – Toolbox Talk
- Hurry Up Can Hurt – Toolbox Talk

Remember to practice Safety; don't learn it by accident.

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