

Golf Car Safety – Best Practices

Golf Car versus Low Speed Vehicle

The following best practices pertain to “golf cars” or what we commonly refer to as “golf carts”. By definition a “golf car” is a vehicle that is not capable of exceeding 20 MPH. Golf cars are not required to be licensed by the federal motor vehicle code but there are state and local requirements that pertain to golf cars and golf car operations and must be followed to ensure the safety of operators, passengers and pedestrian traffic. Additionally, this document may go over and beyond that which is required by local, state and/or federal authorities based upon accident data, risk and golf car exposures.

This document does not pertain to the use of low (LSV) or medium speed vehicles. An LSV is defined as a four wheeled vehicle with a top speed of 25 MPH. Each state and local authority may have specific rules pertaining to the use of and for LSV equipment. If your organization operates low or medium speed vehicles you should access the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety website listed below to monitor compliance with state regulations. While it is not the focus of this document, many of the practices listed may also apply to low and medium speed vehicles and should be incorporated into your related safe operating practices.

Authorized Drivers:

Comprehensive driver qualification is necessary to ensure that employees operating golf cars are functionally and mentally prepared to operate your golf cars as they transport passengers or commute throughout and in between lots. While golf cars appear to be “innocuous” with regard to potential for accidents, some of the most costly and severe injuries that have occurred with Alliant’s Parking Clients are the result of unsafe golf car operations. The following are minimum standards for employees provided the privilege of operating a golf car. Operators of golf cars must:

- Be 18 years of age and possess a current valid drivers’ license.
- Attend golf car vehicle safety training.
- Pass a written test administered following training.
- Pass an operator’s driving test.

Alliant also suggests that employees operating golf cars undergo refresher training no less than annually and that any observation of an operator violating a safe practice result in immediate coaching and potential discipline that may lead to termination.

General Safety

Minimum safe operating practices must also be developed and monitored by local management. These practices may not be all inclusive based upon environmental factors associated with your operations but include:

- Only authorized employees are permitted to drive the cars.
- There shall be no towing or transporting of golf cars by golf cars or passenger vehicles. Disabled golf cars must be towed and/or transported by vehicles designated specifically for that purpose.
- Never back up without looking to see what is behind the car.
- Golf cars are never to be used for personal use.
- No cell phone, electronic device or any other means of communication may be used while operating.
- Do not operate a golf car when impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- Wet or icy conditions present additional hazards that may cause a golf car to lose traction or affect operator control. Limited or restricted vehicle paths may be necessary when these conditions exist.
- All accidents/incidents must be reported to your supervisor.
- When the golf car is not in use, place the control lever in the “Neutral” position, remove the key, and set the parking pedal brake.
- Vehicle charging should take place in a designated area with proper design protection. Employees should be trained how to properly charge a golf car and must wear appropriate personal protection when doing so, such as when there is exposure to an open battery.
- Employees must perform pre-shift inspection of the golf car before each shift. Deficiencies should result in an immediate work order and the golf car should be taken out of service if the deficiency may cause harm to an operator, passenger or property damage.

The inspection checklist should be completed, signed, dated, and submitted to your supervisor before each shift. If repairs or damage is noted, vehicle must be taken out of service and reported to your supervisor. The following items should be observed:

- ☐ Disconnect all battery charger cords before using the golf car or LSV.
- ☐ 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. (Do not attempt to clean up leaks. Report leaks to your supervisor.)
- ☐ Head, tail, brake lights and turn signals (if equipped) are in working order.

Passenger Safety

- Do not operate the vehicle until all the passengers have indicated to you that their seatbelt is fastened and secure.
- Drivers and passengers must remain seated while the vehicle is moving. Never permit passengers from stepping off a moving vehicle.
- Never exceed the number of available seats for the number of passengers.
- All vehicles should have seat belts, with the operator and all passengers should be restrained where available.
- All passengers should keep hands, arms, legs and feet within the confines of the vehicle at all times when the car is in motion
- No joy riding.
- Signage should be posted in the golf car that states “Remain seated at all times & secure your seatbelt while the vehicle is in motion.
- **No passengers are permitted to occupy rear-facing seats at any time.**

While Vehicle is in Motion

- Golf cars and low-speed vehicles that are equipped with headlights, taillights and brake lights shall be fully operational while vehicle is in motion.
- A golf car cart should be operated at a speed equivalent to a well-paced walk but no faster than 15 mph.
- The maximum speed of a golf car or low-speed vehicle depends upon the terrain over which it is being driven, the weather conditions, and the total weight of the vehicle, passengers and any equipment being carried.
- Descending grades >10% adversely affects the stability of the golf car and its ability to stop. Management has identified these areas where cars are prohibited and will be covered during initial training and review sessions.
- Slow down and honk the horn at all intersections.
- Approach sharp or blind corners with extreme caution and reduce speed.
- 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 entry ways.
- Designated paths/roadways have been identified by management. Deviating from these areas is prohibited. State and local laws may not permit a golf car on a public street.
- Expect the unexpected. i.e. pedestrians stepping off the curb into the pathway of a vehicle
- Observe all vehicle traffic laws such as lane travel, stop signs, legal passing of other vehicles, etc.
- Never shift gears while the vehicle is in motion.
- When driving, maintain adequate distance between vehicles.
- Once stopped, make sure all passengers have exited the vehicle and completely left the area. Often passengers exit on the wrong side of the vehicle and are in the drivers blind spot. Sometimes passengers forget something and come back for it. Sometimes passengers get off at the wrong place and come back to get back on.

Post Operation

- Conduct an inspection of the vehicle to assure no damage has occurred while in use. Report damage to supervisor.
- Golf cars should be parked in designated area that is well-ventilated and away from open flame or source of ignition.
- Do not park cars where they will block emergency equipment, pedestrian aisles, doorways, or the normal traffic flow.
- Car should be secured with a cable and lock or other equivalent locking mechanism to reduce likelihood of unauthorized use.
- Key should be removed and stored in a secure location.
- Use only an approved battery charger to recharge the batteries – one that is designed to shut off automatically when the batteries are fully charged.

Maintaining a Golf Car or Low Speed Vehicle:

Preventative maintenance program shall be performed by a qualified, trained and authorized person. Under no circumstance should any employee not properly trained be permitted to perform maintenance on the golf cars.

For those authorized to conduct maintenance, the following guidelines should be considered:

- ☐ Use only properly insulated tools when performing maintenance
- ☐ Block chassis before working underneath golf car
- ☐ An ABC fire extinguisher should be kept in close proximity. Only those trained in proper use should attempt to extinguish an electrical fire.
- ☐ Proper personal protective equipment must be used.
- ☐ Spill kits should be readily available for battery leaks.
- ☐ Inspect golf cars and low speed vehicles in accordance with manufacture's recommendations (brakes, steering mechanisms, warning devices, governors, safety decals and all other safety devices).
- ☐ Do not modify the car in any manner that affects the recommendation mode of operation, speed or safety of the vehicle.
- ☐ Keep records of all maintenance performed including date, name of person performing maintenance and type of service completed.

References:

- American National Standard for Golf Cars – Safety and Performance Specifications, ANSI/ILTV Z130.1-2012
- National Golf Cart Association, Golf Car Safety 2008.

(Organization Name) Policy:

It is the policy of <Organization Name> to provide employees with a safe and healthful environment. <Organization Name> has developed this policy and training program regarding the safe operation golf cars and low speed vehicles in the workplace. Federal and State laws governing the operation of these vehicles will be followed and drivers are required to operate such vehicles in compliance with Federal and State laws.

It is the intent of this organization to provide a safe place to work. Accident and injury prevention is crucial to the success and well-being of all employees. Working together, we can achieve our goal of safety.

An employee may not operate a golf car or low speed vehicle until he/she is properly trained in inspection procedures, attends a safety program prior to operating a vehicle and signs the policy page acknowledging he/she will abide by <Organization Name>'s guidelines and rules outlined in this document.

Employee Acknowledgment

Employee Name: _____

Employee ID#: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

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| | I have read and understand the Golf Car safety policy |
| | I understand the terms and conditions of the Golf Car Safety Policy and will comply with all safety operating procedures. |
| | I have been provided with the opportunity to ask questions related to this policy. |
| | I have attended the low-speed/motorized cart safety training class on: (Date: _____) |
| | I possess a valid driver license and give my permission to have it validated. |

Employee Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date

04/2023

This Tribal First Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice. For more information on this topic, please contact Tribal First Risk Control Consulting at (888) 737-4752 or riskcontrol@tribalfirst.com.