



# HAZARD ALERT

Cherie Berry, Commissioner of Labor

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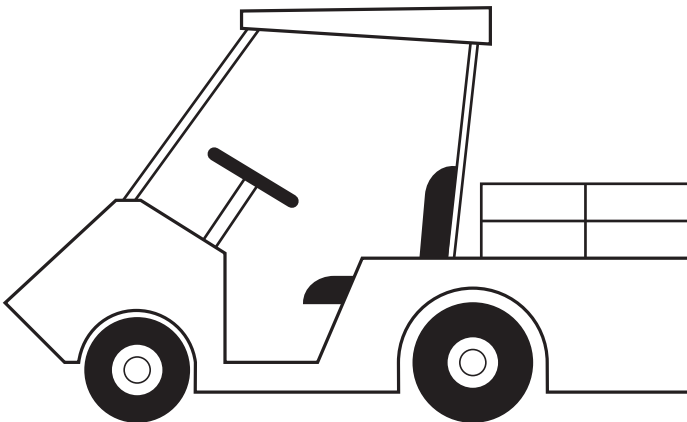
Occupational Safety and Health Division

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## NCDOL Urges Employers to Be Aware of Golf Cart Dangers

When most people think of riding in golf carts, they imagine a leisurely few hours spent on a golf course. Unfortunately, as many employers and employees have learned, riding in a golf cart can be deadly.

Golf carts are not stable vehicles. Their light weight and small tires, and the fact that they are often used on uneven terrain, result in their ability to easily tip over or throw riders out of the cart.



In the past few years, OSHA has investigated 15 fatalities involving the unsafe use of golf carts. Six of these fatal accidents were due to employees riding on the back of golf carts and being thrown from the cart after a sudden turn or traveling over a bump. Four fatalities resulted from employees being thrown from the passenger compartment of a cart, again after a sudden turn or traveling on rough ground. Three employees drowned after driving a golf cart down or across a slope and into water, where they were trapped. One employee was killed when the golf cart overturned, pinning the victim underneath the cart. One employee died after jumping onto a moving golf cart and then falling off.

While many of the accidents have occurred on golf courses and involved golf course employees, some have happened in other industries. A common non-golf course use of carts is on automobile or boat dealer lots. The carts are used to transport people on these large lots. Golf carts are also used in large industrial buildings and warehouses. The unsafe use of these vehicles can result in severe accidents and fatalities regardless of where they are operated.

To prevent these accidents, train your employees to always follow the manufacturer's guidelines on operation and travel with golf carts and to operate carts at a safe speed for the conditions. Employees should be instructed never to ride on the back of a golf cart. Employees riding in the passenger compartment must remain alert to the terrain and conditions around the cart to be prepared for travel over uneven terrain. Drivers of carts must be instructed to avoid sudden turns, be aware of any obstacles in their path of travel, and never allow riders on the back of the cart.



### 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.
- 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 doorways.
- 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 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

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.

With proper training of employees and supervisory observation of employees operating golf carts, you can prevent needless tragedy at your workplace. NCDOL offers free training to employers on occupational safety and health standards. Copies of safety and health standards for 29 CFR 1910 (General Industry) and 29 CFR 1926 (Construction) are available from NCDOL/ETTA upon request. Publications can also be ordered online ([www.nclabor.com](http://www.nclabor.com)).

*For more information concerning education, training and interpretations of occupational safety and health standards contact:*

**Bureau of Education, Training and Technical Assistance**  
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*For more information concerning occupational safety and health consultative services and safety awards programs contact:*

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