

**G**olf carts are an increasingly popular mode of transportation at large worksites and complexes. Employees use golf carts for delivering mail, tools, and supplies around the workplace, and for transporting individuals with disabilities. However, driving these low-speed vehicles (LSVs) around busy areas can present dangers.

With more workplaces using golf carts, accidents are on the rise. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reports over 130 work-related incidents resulting in citations, injuries, and death associated with golf cart use.

The increased power and lack of safety regulations on golf carts are likely adding to rising rates of accidents. Most golf cart injuries happen when someone is thrown from the vehicle, involved in a rollover, or struck by a golf cart. Common injuries include concussions, fractures, respiratory complications, neck injuries, and spinal injuries. With these hazards in mind, there are steps a company can take to reduce the risks.

## Golf cart safety statement

Write a safety statement, sign it, and place it in a location for all to see. Include policies to manage and maintain equipment, and ensure employees safely operate the carts. When management shows an interest in preventing accidents and providing a safe workplace, employees are more likely to do the same. A sample company safety statement may include:

“This company strives to maintain a safe workplace. Accident and injury prevention is an important part of our job. Safety is everyone’s responsibility. We can achieve our safety goals with regular training, inspections, and maintenance. It is the policy of this company to protect our employees, equipment, facilities, and grounds. Employees operating golf carts must be trained in safe operations of the vehicles, authorized to drive the carts, and aware of others when driving any vehicle in the workplace.”



**Table 1.** Primary causes of U.S. golf cart-related injuries

Cause of injury	Percentage of cases
Fell/jumped from cart	38.3
Struck/run over by cart	16.2
Collision with a vehicle or object	9.6
Cart overturned	8.9
Injury getting into or out of cart	4.9
Injury to protruding limb	3.2
Other/not specified	18.9

## Operational rules

List rules for golf cart operations, including procedures specific to your company’s needs. Here are some examples:

- Supervisor’s approval is needed for employees to operate golf carts.
- Employees must receive training and approval before operating golf carts.
- Contract employees, trainees, and visitors may not operate golf carts.
- Golf cart use is limited to employees whose duties require walking significant distances, transporting specific passengers, or hauling specific equipment.
- Towing is limited to golf carts designated for hauling.
- Golf carts cannot cross public roads.

**Table 2.** Golf cart-related injuries treated in U.S. emergency departments (1990-2006\*)

Description	Cases	Weighted estimate	Percentage
<b>Age (years)</b>			
Children (<16)	1169	46,117	31.2
Adults (≥16)	2243	101,578	68.8
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	2178	93,264	63.1
Female	1234	54,432	36.9
<b>Diagnosis</b>			
Soft Tissue Injury <sup>a</sup>	1553	70,523	47.7
Fracture	798	32,914	22.3
Laceration/amputation	494	22,926	15.8
Concussion	86	3,176	2.2
Internal Organ Injury	217	6,412	4.3
Other <sup>b</sup>	264	11,745	7.7
<b>Body-part injured</b>			
Head/neck <sup>c</sup>	856	33,262	22.5
Trunk <sup>d</sup>	539	24,624	16.7
Arm <sup>e</sup>	715	32,959	22.3
Leg <sup>f</sup>	1226	53,948	36.5
Other <sup>g</sup>	76	2,903	2.0
<b>Disposition</b>			
Treated/released	3052	135,278	91.6
Hospitalized <sup>h</sup>	340	11,544	7.8

\*Am J Prev Med 2008;35(1)

<sup>a</sup>Includes sprain, strain, contusion, abrasion, hematoma

<sup>b</sup>Includes burns, crushing, dislocation, foreign body, dental injury, puncture, hemorrhage, electric shock, submersion, avulsion, not documented

<sup>c</sup>Includes head, neck, face, mouth, ear, eye

<sup>d</sup>Includes upper trunk, lower trunk, shoulder

<sup>e</sup>Includes upper arm, lower arm, elbow, wrist, hand, finger

<sup>f</sup>Includes upper leg, lower leg, knee, ankle, foot, toe

<sup>g</sup>Includes pubic region, injury to ≥20% of body, not documented

<sup>h</sup>Includes admitted, transferred, held <24 hours for observation

## Operator training

To help prevent workplace accidents, train all employees who operate golf carts before vehicle use. Supervisors should oversee training and approval. Place the trainee's name, title, department, date of training, and supervisor's signature in the employee's file. Employees approved to drive golf carts should review golf cart safety procedures at hire and annually to reinforce expected behaviors. Any employee who sees unsafe driving must report the driver to management.

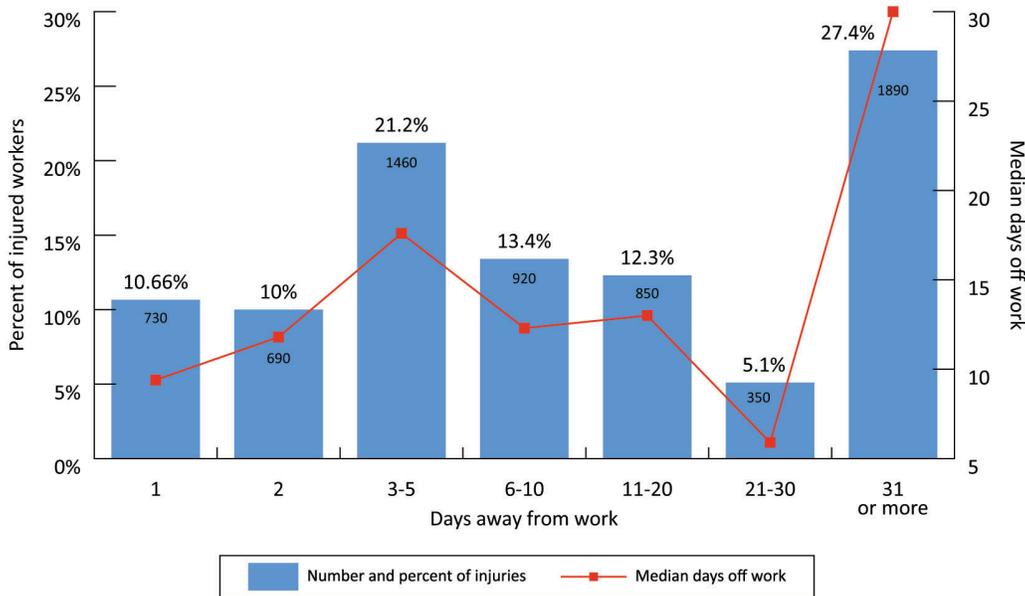
## Safety procedures

Create safety procedures based on the area, the total weight of passengers or tow loads, maximum speeds allowed, weather conditions, and manufacturer's recommendations. Safety procedures may include:

- Keep legs, feet, and arms inside the golf cart.
- Drivers and passengers must remain seated while the vehicle is moving.

- Never reverse downhill.
- Use caution when driving over wet, muddy, steep, or uneven ground.
- Never operate a golf cart under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Place the golf cart control lever in neutral and remove the key when not in use.
- Lock the brake before exiting the golf cart.
- Limit the number of people in the golf cart to the amount recommended.
- Install seatbelts in golf carts and require driver and passenger use.
- Approach steep or uneven ground vertically to avoid tipping or sliding off a golf cart.
- Drive on sidewalks when transporting equipment to or from a worksite.

## U.S. Golf Cart-Related Injuries (2011-2017)



- Yield to pedestrians. Pull off the sidewalk or stop when approaching pedestrians.
- Do not drive while distracted (eating, talking on cell phones, texting, wearing headphones of any type, reaching for objects, etc.).
- Reduce speed when taking sharp turns or entering doorways.
- Operate at speeds equal to a well-paced walk, no faster than 15 mph.
- Slow down and honk the horn at intersections.
- Use safety mirrors at intersections to ensure pedestrian safety.
- Never block emergency equipment, aisles, doorways, or intersections when parked.
- Store golf carts with a cable and lock.
- Report any accidents or damage to a supervisor immediately.

### Regular inspections and maintenance

Golf carts must be inspected, maintained, and documented regularly to improve safety and reduce the risks of accidents. Before each use, operators should check for fluid leaks, correct tire inflation, and properly working brakes, steering, horn, and acceleration.

When recharging electric golf cart batteries, use approved chargers designed to shut off automatically when fully charged, and remember to disconnect battery charger cords before using the golf cart. In case of battery acid spills, pour baking soda on the acid before cleaning, and wash skin exposed to battery acid thoroughly. Never smoke or have an open flame near a battery charging station.

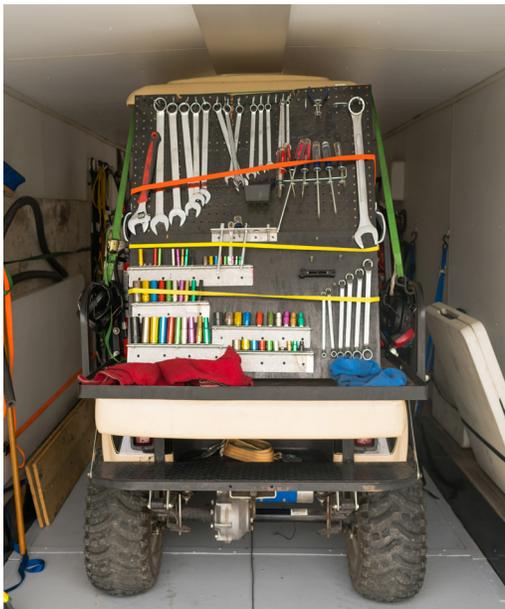
### Conclusion

Worksites that allow golf cart use can help prevent cart-related injuries by requiring operator training, creating rules and safety procedures, inspecting vehicles often, and scheduling maintenance regularly. These steps are vital in the workplace to help prevent accidents.



*Safety Violations Hotline*  
**1-800-452-9595**  
**safetyhotline@tdi.texas.gov**

The Texas Department of Insurance,  
 Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC)  
 E-mail **resourcecenter@tdi.texas.gov**  
 or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.



## Review Questions

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

## Answers

1. True. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring operators complete golf cart training before driving the vehicle.
2. False. Pedestrians always have the right-of-way. If operated on a sidewalk, the cart operator must pull off the sidewalk or stop the golf cart when approaching pedestrians.
3. Inspect the golf cart before each use.



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