Golf cart safety

Golf cart accidents are a common cause of golf course property damage and personal injury to guests visiting a golf course. There are steps that can be taken to reduce or prevent these types of accidents from occurring. There are three types of golf cart accidents:

1. Being struck by a moving golf cart
2. Falling out of or off of a moving golf cart
3. Collision between a golf cart and another fixed or moving object

When preparing a golf cart safety program, be sure to include the following information.

Golf cart licensing and registration

The course should ensure that all golf carts meet the registration, safety, and licensing requirements for the jurisdiction in which the course is located. Some locations consider golf carts to be a type of vehicle.

Driver checks

Operation of carts should be limited to persons with a valid driver's license. People should be required to sign a rental contract for use of the vehicle. The contract should state that the operator agrees to follow all safety rules of the course. It should include appropriate risk transfer devices, such as waivers of liability, assumption of risk, and indemnification agreements. Course operators should consult appropriate counsel for the development of such forms.

Driver instructions

Driving instructions should be given to all golf cart drivers when the cart is turned over to the driver. These rules should also be posted in every golf cart. In addition, course operators should post signs throughout the facility that promote safe cart operation. Course employees should be trained to enforce the rules and safe practices on the course.

Other course users

The course should develop policies to ensure adjoining residents or concessionaires who use their own golf carts on the course are appropriate drivers and understand the safety rules established by the course.

Golf cart maintenance

Carts should be checked at the beginning of the day and after each round for visible damage and proper operation of safety features (e.g., steering, brakes, speed controls, and reverse alarms). Improperly functioning or damaged carts should not be allowed out until they have been repaired. Carts should be kept clean and free of garbage. In addition, a preventative maintenance program should be established in accordance with the cart manufacturer's requirements.

Golf course conditions

A maintenance program for the golf cart paths, bridges, and tunnels should be established to ensure they are in safe condition. The design of these areas should be considered for golf cart safety. A regular inspection should be done to ensure these areas remain in safe condition.

Fire safety

Golf carts should not be charged in areas where internal combustion engine-driven equipment such as tractors are stored. The electrical systems in areas where batteries are stored or are being charged should be approved for Class I, Division 1 locations, and battery charging areas should be provided with mechanical ventilation.

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