CAR

GOLF CAR FLEET MAINTENANCE: PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT

The condition of your fleet at the end of the lease term helps determine its trade value. It’s also one of the key factors that affects how Club Car and other golf car manufacturers set the lease price for your next fleet. Additionally, fleet condition contributes to the experience you offer your members and customers. That’s why it makes sense to keep your fleet looking and performing at its best.

Before every customer gets behind the wheel of a golf car, ask yourself the following questions. In addition, review the CAR-CARE guidelines, listed here, to ensure superior golf fleet performance:

- Have you performed a daily inspection?
- Is the fleet fully charged?
- Is the steering responding properly?
- Are the brakes functioning properly, without excessive free play?
- Is the accelerator pedal free from obstruction? Does it return to its upright position?
- Are all nuts, bolts, and screws tight?
- Do the tires have the proper pressure?
- Have the batteries been filled to the proper level?
- Are the wires tightly connected, the battery post, and free of corrosion?
- Does any of the wiring show cracks or fraying?
- Are the engine and fuel at the right levels?
- Have you checked for leaks in the fuel tank, fuel line, cap, pump, filters, and carburetor?

DAILY INSPECTION

Before the fleet heads out on the course, we recommend a daily inspection. This daily inspection can reduce downtime, keep cars performing at the top of their game, and includes a few simple tasks. While staging vehicles, cart attendants should check the steering response. They should ensure the brakes activate properly and that there is no excessive free play. Your staff should also check the accelerator pedal and make sure it returns to its upright position. Check both the brake and accelerator pedals to ensure none are damaged or could interfere with normal operation. Also, evaluate the \textbf{FORWARD/NEUTRAL/REVERSE switch}, reverse switch, and speed to confirm proper function and also pay attention to any odd noises.

The last check is a complete walk around of the car as it is parked in the staging area:
- Make sure that all visible nuts, bolts, and screws are securely fastened.
- Check for proper tire pressure, wear, and damage.
- Fill batteries to the proper level. Also check battery posts to ensure wires are tight and free of corrosion.
- Look for cracks, loose connections, and frayed wiring in the charger cord, plug, and receptacles.
- On gasoline vehicles, check the engine oil and fuel levels.
- Check for leaks in the fuel tank as well as the fuel lines, cap, pump, filters, and carburetor.
- Confirm that all safety and warning decals are present.

TIRE PRESSURE

Maintaining proper tire pressure in your fleet golf cars is as important as it is with your family car.

- If tire pressure is too low, your car will use more gas or electrical energy.
- Check your tire pressure monthly, because dramatic fluctuations in daytime and nighttime temperatures can cause tire pressure to fluctuate. Temperature changes of even 10 degrees can cause tires to lose 1 psi of pressure.

- Electric vehicles: 18-20psi (1.24 - 1.38 bars)
- Gas vehicles: 12-14psi (0.83 - 0.96 bars)

- Maintain tire pressure within 1-2 psi of the recommended pressure at all times.

FRONT-END ALIGNMENT

There are several reasons that your cars’ front ends can lose alignment. The most common reasons are curb impact and use in restricted areas over rough terrain.

Alignment problems can lead to uneven tire wear, which will require you to buy tires sooner than planned. Cars that operate with improper alignment also require more energy to operate: 10 to 20 percent more than those with correct alignments.

Alignment should be one of the things you’re checking at least: semi-annually or after 100 rounds.

BATTERIES

Lead-acid batteries are the lifeline of today’s sophisticated electric fleets. They’re also the most expensive vehicle components in a golf car. Like most things, batteries need clean water to survive. Improper fluid levels can cause batteries to fail prematurely.

- Wear the appropriate battery terminal protector spray to battery terminals.

CHARGING

Properly charged batteries are one of the most important factors in the performance of your golf cars. By the same token, improperly charged batteries can shorten the lifespan and adversely affect your fleet’s performance.

Batteries should be fully charged before a new vehicle is first used, after vehicles have been stored, and before vehicles are released for use each day. All cars should be plugged in chargers overnight for storage, even if the car has only been used for a short time during the day. To charge batteries, insert the charger’s DC plug into the vehicle receptacle.

- Make sure to use a dezoner water purifier and replace the filter cartridges regularly. This will ensure your batteries are getting the best quality water.
- Have a trained technician wash battery tops and clean terminals with baking soda/water solution monthly. Also apply authorized battery terminal protector spray to battery terminals.
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CLEANING

The most visible sign to your customers that your fleet is well maintained is its appearance. A sharp-looking fleet makes a positive statement about your course.

When you clean cars, be sure to use the products recommended in the owner’s manual. Refrain from using silicone-based products on floor mats, pedals, and seats; silicone-based products can leave surfaces slippery and lead to accidents.

Although a pressure washer is undoubtedly the fastest way to remove dirt and debris from golf cars, it can sometimes do as much harm as good. We find that a garden hose at normal pressure is adequate for most clean-up jobs while stopping short of removing paint from the vehicle’s surfaces.

If your staff does use a pressure washer, remind them to keep the fan spray at least six inches away from the surface they’re cleaning and keep the pressure under 1000 psi.

OVERNIGHT AND LONG-TERM STORAGE

Before your staff leaves for the night, they should ensure the fleet will be ready for use at opening the next day.

- The fleet key switches should be in the \textbf{ON} position and the \textbf{FORWARD/REVERSE switch} should be in the \textbf{NEUTRAL} position.
- The park brake should be set.
- All accessories should be powered off to prevent energy draw from the batteries.
- The brake lights should be on. This helps drivers behind you to see your cart is parked.
- The parking lights should be off. They will drain the battery.
- The exhaust fan should be turned off.
- The fan spray at least six inches away from the surface they’re cleaning and keep the pressure under 1000 psi.

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- The fleet key switches should be in the \textbf{OFF} position, the \textbf{FORWARD/REVERSE switch} should be in the \textbf{NEUTRAL} position, and the \textbf{TOW} switch in the \textbf{NEUTRAL} position.
- All accessories should be powered off to prevent energy draw from the batteries.
- Check the air pressure. Do not use the park brake. Ensure vehicles are connected to their chargers, and verify the charger amp meter is greater than 0 to confirm the charger is operating.

ROTATION

Proper fleet rotation starts with a storage facility that has adequate space for each car in the fleet. A measurement of at least six feet by eight feet with a one-foot clearance around the vehicle’s perimeter. We’ve found that if you can make it easy for the staff to maneuver the cars in and out of the facility, you will prevent a lot of the scrapes and dings that can lead to costly repairs.

Club Car provides complimentary standard golf fleet car storage facility plans to assist courses that are building or revising golf car storage facilities. As part of the consultation, we can also provide site recommendation based on the fleet size and amount of space the course receives. Sometimes simply adding or relocating a door opening can lead to improved efficiency and savings.
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