

10 THINGS TO KNOW WHEN BUYING A GOLF CART



GOLF CART RESOURCE
YOUR #1 RESOURCE FOR GOLF CARTS

1. Where will the Golf Cart be Used?

Determining where you will be using the Golf Cart is critical for choosing how to purchase. Let's look at a few of the ways a Golf Cart can be used:

- Fleet Golf Cart for Golf Courses
- Local Commuter (Golf, Shopping, etc)
- Business Campus
- College/University
- Industrial Site
- Military Base

For the sake of this eBook, we will be focusing on those that will be using the vehicle as a Local Commuter for transportation purposes within their community to go shopping, golfing, and other recreational activities via local streets. For those interested in Business Campus, University, Industrial Uses, and Military Bases, we do not recommend Golf Carts as they were not intended for those types of uses.

2. How will You be Using It?

The location of your home in relation to your use of the golf cart is important. For example, if you will be traveling from your house to the golf course, then you will want to pay attention to the amount of miles you will be driving. In addition, you will be driving the Golf Cart on the street, therefore safety is of the utmost importance. Whether you are driving 1 mile or 5 miles, safety will be key. Also, if golfing, then accessories, storage and comfort in the vehicle are of great importance.

For transportation of 3 or more, a golf cart will need to be designed for the street and safe to use. A typical fleet golf cart was not designed to stop additional weight beyond two people and can have trouble carrying the extra weight in terms of distance and safety. Most four and six seater units are still built off of a golf cart suspension and frame leading to safety issues. Therefore, if you are going to buy a golf cart to sit six or more, make sure it has proper suspension, seat belts, power system, and braking system.

3. Verify Golf Cart Laws based on Federal, State, and Local Ordinances

Not every community allows Golf Carts to be used. Some do not even allow Gas Golf Carts to be used. Therefore, it is important to check with your Local State Government Authority to inquire the laws pertaining to Golf Carts. You can also check out our State Laws for Golf Carts by [CLICKING HERE](#).

On a Federal Level, any community may use an LSV (a vehicle that resembles a Golf Cart) on streets with posted speed limits of 35 MPH and under. LSV's meet a higher safety standard as set by the NHTSA. To read more on these vehicles, go here.

4. Safety

We cannot say it enough. Safety in Golf Carts is crucial. A good question to ask is whether or not you would use the local golf cart at your course for driving on the street next to trucks and cars? With this being said, improving a Golf Cart's safety can save your life. There are some manufacturers that make Golf Carts designed for the street. We talked about one of these classifications earlier with a higher safety standard in a Low Speed Vehicle (LSV) or Neighborhood Electric Vehicle.

Some golf carts are made of aluminum which is nice for a lower weight but not for protection if you happen to be in a collision. Most vehicles only have rear brakes that provide limited stopping power, so make sure they are in good condition prior to purchase. Seat belts are crucial for driving on the street, however they are typically something that has to be added on. Also, having a vehicle that is visible on the street will increase driver awareness.

5. Purchasing New or Used

Purchasing a new or used Golf Cart is not entirely different from purchasing an automobile except for one distinctive difference. Most used Golf Carts have been used on Golf Courses. With this in mind, be aware of the dangers of purchasing a vehicle that was used on a Golf Course for 3-5 years. Many golf cart dealers will purchase these vehicles and refurbish them. Therefore, you may here the term refurbished Golf Cart or reconditioned Golf Cart. The concern here is whether or not the vehicle is safe to drive on the streets. It may look new, however it most definitely is not.

The advantage of purchasing a new vehicle is that you know the state of the vehicle's condition. The concern here is to compare and contrast warranties provided by each vehicle manufacturer. If they state a 3 year warranty, then be sure to read the fine print as they are typically a tiered warranty versus an all inclusive warranty as seen in the automobile world. A tiered warranty means that only certain components are covered for 'x' amount of years.

Next, it is valuable to decipher if the warranty is provided by the manufacturer or the dealer. If provided by dealer, make sure they have a solid business foundation since they may not be around long enough to cover the proposed warranty. Lastly, remember a warranty is to cover manufacture defects and is not an insurance policy. Normal wear and tear items will not be covered under a typical warranty.

It is also good to note that most vehicle warranties do not cover batteries in electric Golf Carts. Therefore, make sure you read the fine print for the battery warranty provided by the battery manufacturer or dealer. A Two year battery warranty is one of the best and supported by select manufacturers, however be aware of a 3-5 year battery warranty as it is probably too good to be true.

6. Verify the Vehicle's Condition

Whether purchasing new or used, it is important to check the condition of certain components on the vehicle. For instance, most Golf Cart manufacturers still require a dealer to assemble new vehicles. Therefore, be vigilant when inspecting the body, windshield, and roof of the Golf Cart. Also, check the tires to insure they are new since it is common to swap tires between vehicles.

If it is a refurbished or reconditioned Golf Cart as mentioned earlier, then the following components should generally be new:

- Windshield
- Wheels and Tires
- Batteries ([Click here to to learn how to tell the age of golf cart batteries](#))
- Paint Job
- Seats
- Roof
- Dash
- Headlights, Brake Lights, Turn Signals (if applicable)
- Motor
- Controller
- Normal Wear and Tear parts in the suspension (Shocks, Leaf Springs, Bushings, etc)

This is an extensive list for a reason. Seeing and verifying is believing when looking at purchasing a refurbished or reconditioned Golf Cart. Some dealers will spray paint the frame to make it look new making it difficult to insure the replacements of springs, shocks, bush-

ings and other components on the chassis. In addition, determining if the controller is new or not, it is best to request them to show you the hours of use with their handheld.

7. Purchasing a Gas or Electric Golf Cart

Determining whether to purchase a Gas or Electric Golf Cart is important to decide when shopping. We will try to break this down into simple terms. In terms of the best for the environment, an electric Golf Cart will win every time. In terms of cost, some assume a gas Golf Cart costs less to operate due to batteries being expensive for Electric Golf Carts. However, a typical electric Golf Cart comes with new batteries that will last three to nine years depending on type of battery pack, maintenance of the battery pack, range driven per day, location vehicle is being used, and the speed and acceleration of the vehicle. Therefore, the batteries in an electric Golf Cart is a fixed fuel cost determined by the life of the batteries where as a gas Golf Cart has to be fueled on a weekly to monthly basis much like a car.

Here is a shortlist of the pros and cons of an Electric Golf Cart:

Pros:

- Plugs into a regular household outlet
- Quiet
- Better Acceleration
- Less moving parts for easier maintenance
- Emission Free
- Economically Costs Less the Longer it is owned
- Higher Market Demand making it cost less than Gas to Purchase
- Easier to Diagnose due to On Board Computer present

Cons:

- Driving Range per Charge dictated by Battery Pack Size
- Unfamiliar Vehicle Platform
- Expensive battery cost every three to nine years (fuel cost)

Here is a shortlist of the pros and cons of a Gas Golf Cart:

Pros:

- No Range issues
- Familiar Vehicle Platform (similar to a gas car)
- Easier to modify the Speed

Cons:

- More moving parts and more expensive to maintain
- Louder than an electric vehicle
- Emits stinky emission smells
- Lower Market Demand leading to higher costs
- Difficult to diagnose due to no On Board Computer

While this may promote electric Golf Carts over gas Golf Carts, there are legitimate reasons for purchasing a Gas Golf Cart such as: Golf Cart will only be used one to months a year, distance driven will be beyond 45 miles, you have technical expertise with small engines and prefer to fix yourself, and you do not have a place where you can charge the Golf Cart.

8. Speed

For the most part, everyone wants their Golf Cart to go fast. It is first important to articulate that top speed is different than acceleration. An electric Golf Cart will typically always have quick acceleration than a gas Golf Cart since an electric Golf Cart has better torque. The top speed of a Golf Cart is indicated by the manufacturer. Modifications can be made after the fact, however this will lead to unsatisfactory results. For example, a Golf Cart that was made to go 15 MPH and is modified to go 20+ MPH will lead to more wear and tear on the vehicle in different ways depending if it is electric or gas. Increasing speed of a Golf Cart from 15 to 20 MPH is a 33% mechanical increase. It'd be like driving a standard sedan an average of 93 MPH on a highway when the posted speed limit is 70 MPH. It leads to faster wear and tear and safety concerns. We have to remember that most Golf Carts were only engineered to do certain speeds.

9. Insurance & Registration

Often, people will ask if their Golf Cart requires Insurance. If it is classified as a Low Speed Vehicle (LSV), then it will most definitely need to be licensed and registered. If it is classified as a PTV or Golf Cart, then it is dependent on the State if it requires insurance and registration. Please check our [Federal and State Law page](#) or check with your local government authority.

We do recommend that you get insurance for your Golf Cart regardless if local authorities require it or not. Sometimes, your homeowner's insurance will include into their coverage for no additional charge. If not, it is very inexpensive to purchase Golf Cart insurance.

10. Service & Maintenance

Every form of Golf Cart requires regular service and maintenance. A gas Gas Golf Cart needs regular engine maintenance. An electric Golf Cart needs the batteries to be maintained on a monthly basis by adding water to the batteries. For the most part, an electric Golf Cart can be maintained by you with a regular service occurring once every 12 to 24 month. A gas Golf Cart needs the engine to be tuned every 6 to 12 months if the vehicle is to last a long time.

In general, be sure that you have a reliable dealer for you to call on in case you have issues. To find dealers near you to provide assistance, please refer to our [dealer locator page](#).