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Golf Carts: A Hidden Danger



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Most of you probably think of golf carts as harmless mini-vehicles. The reality is, far more people than you would imagine arrive at the emergency room every year because of a golf cart accident. Each year in the US, about 15,000 people require emergency care from a golf cart-related injury.

History

If I told you that motorized golf carts have been around since 1935, would you believe me? That's the case, although they were not available for public use until the 1950s.

The inventor, a man by the name of Lyman Beecher, used his expertise in electrical engineering to put together the first ever golf cart.

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He frequently played golf on a hilly terrain and was afraid that he might not be able to walk the course on his own as he aged. Being the resourceful man he is, he decided to take matter into his own hands and ended up inventing the famous vehicle.

He constantly modified his invention until it was the cart of choice all around the USA until after World War II.

By 1955, only 40 percent of golf courses in the USA had the ability to offer their patrons carts for use. Fast forward 12 years to 1967, and 92% of courses had carts available for rent. Today, there is upwards of 2 million carts in the country.

Golf Cart Laws around the US

Laws and regulations for golf carts differ from state to state. At least two dozen states have already passed laws allowing local governments to authorize golf cart usage on public roads.

In the last few years, more than 350 cities and counties in the US have introduced and passed laws that allow golf carts on their roads.

These laws, of course, come with additional restrictions. For example, many states prohibit the use of golf carts on public roads at night, and many states limit the usage areas only to low-speed roads.

California, for example, allows driving a golf cart on public roads given that the driver has purchased a permit, provides proof of insurance, and a drivers license. Smaller cities and counties within the state have their own local ordinances regarding driving golf carts on public roads. Because of previous accidents in Ontario (<https://montgomerysteele.com/ontario-car-accident-lawyer/>), the city has enacted rules to prohibit golf carts on any street with a speed limit over 35 MPH and on streets with highway numbers.

Dangers highlighted through crashes



Unfortunately, golf cart accidents happen on a daily basis. Often times the injuries are mild, but catastrophic and even fatal injuries happen from time to time as well.



Here are a few examples of news articles about golf cart accidents that have happened recently in 2019:

- Monticello 16-year-old teen dies in a golf cart accident
(<https://www.wctv.tv/content/news/Monticello-teen-dies-in-golf-cart-accident-512066142.html>) (WCTV).
- 7 Injured, 2 Seriously, in a golf cart accident in Antioch (<https://patch.com/illinois/grayslake/7-injured-2-seriously-antioch-golf-cart-crash>) (PATCH).
- Man Hospitalized after golf cart flips over in a course in Ohio
(<https://golfweek.com/2019/06/24/man-hospitalized-after-golf-cart-flips-over-on-ohio-course/>) (Golfweek).

Yes, you can still get a DUI on a golf cart

People may think that because golf carts are small and presumably safe, and because they're often driven on private roads/courses it would be okay to drive while intoxicated. Think Again.

Here are the places where driving while intoxicated is acceptable: Nowhere.

So, if you're meeting up with your fellow country club golfers and decide to have a few drinks, DO NOT drive your golf cart.

Have someone else drive you instead. You'd be doing yourself and everyone around you a favor.

How to drive a golf cart safely

Finally, here are a few pointers to help you stay safe when using golf carts:

☰ Wear your seatbelt.



- Check blinds when turning. (<https://www.facebook.com/safer.america>) (<https://twitter.com/asafeamerica>) 🔍
- NEVER drive while intoxicated.
- Do NOT drive on the sidewalk.
- Do NOT drive recklessly.
- Always yield to pedestrians and be conscious of your surroundings.

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Ahmed holds a BA in International Business with an emphasis in English from San Diego State University. When he's not writing you can find him in the kitchen whipping up Michelin-starred meals or hiking a mountain trail.

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