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Regional Administrator

Golf Carts Aren't Just for Golfers

- Keith Piercy, Compliance Safety and Health Officer, Tampa OSHA Area Office

I don't play golf. Nor, I suspect, do a lot of you. It doesn't matter. This story isn't just about golf. That's because golf carts are no longer just on golf courses. You see them all over—on campuses, large plant facilities and in warehouses. They're also typically used as work vehicles to transport workers and equipment from one building or job site to another. So safe use of golf carts is an important topic. This is especially true when you consider that some workers have a tendency to view them as toys



and ride around on them without worrying about the danger, but golf carts are dangerous. They can tip over, tumble down damp hills and collide with other vehicles.

Golf carts have become a popular mode of transportation, on and off the links because of their small size, low maintenance, and ease of use. Case reports suggest severe, debilitating injuries as consequences of golf cart incidents. An estimated 48,255 golf cart-related injuries occurred in the U.S. between 2002 and 2005; the injury rate was 4.14 out of a 100,000 population. The highest injury rates were observed in 10 to 19 year-olds and those aged 80 and older. Males had a higher injury rate than females.¹

From an occupational standpoint, nationwide between 05/01/2007 and 05/01/2011, OSHA investigated 21 fatalities involving golf cart type equipment; 7 of which occurred in Region IV. Fifty-two percent of the fatalities occurred at golf and club type facilities.² These accidents were caused by employees who did not take precautions, or generally ignored the rules. Primary causes of the accidents included cart overturns, falling/jumping from moving golf carts, collisions with another vehicle or stationary object, and struck/run over by carts. However simple the rules may be, it is important to adhere to them and help everyone to stay safe. Here are a few simple rules:

Before You Drive

- * Make sure the horn, brakes and lights work.
- * Check the back-up alarm, tire pressure and battery fluid.
- * Before backing up, ensure the area behind you is clear of all obstacles, including vehicles and pedestrians.

Passenger Safety

- * Observe passenger limits. Only two people should ride in a two-person cart and four in a four-person cart.
- * Wear the seatbelt and make sure passengers wear theirs.
- * Don't stand up in a moving golf cart and don't let your passengers either.

Golf Carts (Continued)

When You Drive

- * Drive only in designated areas and stay off city streets.
- * Drive beside pedestrian walkways (not on them).
- * Observe all standard rules of the road, such as coming to a complete stop at stop signs, signaling before a turn and keeping to the right, except to pass.
- * Yield to other vehicles and pedestrians.
- * Don't drive faster than a quick-paced walk.
- * Slow down in wet conditions and on steep slopes when approaching corners, intersections/blind spots, and in areas of heavy pedestrian traffic.
- * Slow down for speed bumps and uneven pavement. Keep off curbs.
- * To avoid tipping, drive the cart straight up and straight down slopes - not on the diagonal.
- * Don't drive while distracted. If something other than driving the cart has your attention, stop the vehicle. This includes eating, talking on a cell phone or jotting down notes.

Stopping and Parking

- * Don't park in front of emergency exits, fire hydrants, fire lanes, sidewalks, ramps, or doors.
- * When parking, set the brake, place the cart in neutral and remove the key.
- * Secure the parked golf cart with a cable or other locking mechanism.

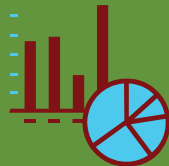
Transporting Goods

- * If the golf cart is used to transport equipment, there are some special safety rules to consider:
 - *Transport materials during periods of low traffic and pedestrian activity.
 - *Don't overload the cart. Take only the bare minimum.
 - *Make sure the materials are securely fastened.
 - *Loads should not extend more than a foot from either side or front of the golf cart.
 - *Use brightly colored material to flag any loads that extend more than three feet (one meter) from the rear of the cart. ¹

Sources: 1. The National Center for Biotechnology Information, Incidence of golf cart-related injury in the United States.
 2. OSHA Fatality and Catastrophe Investigation Summaries

Region IV Fatalities by Area Office

(Accident Date: 10/01/2010 - 06/03/2011)



Region IV (STATE)	TOTAL FATALITIES	TOTAL HOSPITALIZED
Georgia	19	4
Alabama	20	1
Mississippi	10	1
Florida	48	8
North Carolina	2*	0*
South Carolina	0*	0*
Tennessee	2*	3*
Kentucky	0*	0*
REGION IV TOTALS	101	17

Federal Jurisdictional Area



The open submission period for the “OSHA Picture It! Safe Workplaces for Everyone” photo contest will run from May 2, 2011 - August 12, 2011 (11:59 p.m.). Visit www.osha.gov/osha40/photo-contest.html for details.

20ft² – The Area Between You and a Harmful Exposure

- Joan M. Spencer, Compliance Assistance Specialist, Tampa OSHA Area Office

Twenty square feet is the approximate surface area our skin has for potential contact with hazardous substances. Your skin, however, does not absorb every chemical/biological agent with which you have contact.

Systemic occupational exposure to chemicals has traditionally focused on the amount of dusts, fumes, aerosols, and vapors that you breathe. Other exposure routes are often overlooked when evaluating the workplace exposure. We must remember that chemicals can enter the human body not only through inhalation but also through ingestion, injection and skin absorption.

In the simplest terms, penetration and permeation occurs at the outer layer of the skin called the stratum corneum. Just as with other exposures, the concentration of the chemical, the duration of the exposure, and the physical and chemical properties of the chemicals affect the hazard. However, with dermal exposures, other factors such as skin integrity (damaged vs. intact), location of and the amount of surface area of skin exposed to a hazardous substance also play a role in the hazard.

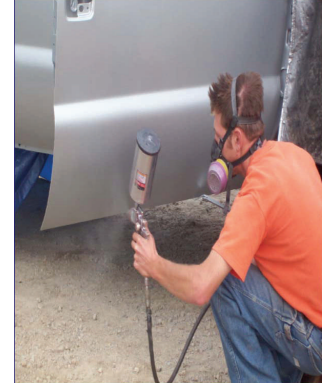
Many of OSHA's Permissible Exposure Limits (PEL) have skin notations to alert you to dermal absorption. More importantly, the Material Safety Data Sheet of the chemicals you use will usually include information regarding whether or not skin absorption is a significant route of exposure. However, if an employee makes complaints or has symptoms of skin exposure, e.g. dryness, rashes or blisters, or systemic effects, such as dizziness, exposure should be halted, contaminated clothing removed and the skin area should be rinsed for 15 minutes. Further medical treatment may also be required, and a workplace exposure hazard assessment needs to be made.

If there is evidence of dermatitis or skin absorption of a chemical, controls should be put in place. The most commonly used controls are personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and other protective clothing. Such controls could include substitution for a less toxic chemical, closed-transfer systems, and ventilation, isolation rooms or robotics for spray applications. Good hygiene such as hand washing before eating and smoking, and showering, reducing repeated exposures through the reuse of clothing, e.g. leather boots and baseball caps, should be encouraged. Discourage employees from using solvents to wash their skin.



A PPE hazard assessment should be done to ensure that the correct PPE is chosen and that the duration of use is determined. Many times workers are using PPE that has been deteriorated by chemical(s) and do not know if they are adequately protected.

For more information on dermal contact, absorption and evaluation methods, see OSHA's Health Topic Page <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/dermalexposure/index.html>. NIOSH has also published new skin guidelines and information on other chemicals. Please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/skin/recommendations.html>.



WATER. REST. SHADE.

The work can't get done without them.

OSHA has now posted a new [Heat Illness Web Page](#) that includes educational materials in English and Spanish, including low-literacy fact sheets for workers, worksite and community posters, and a public service announcement from Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis. The Web page also includes a video from Assistant Secretary Dr. David Michaels (in English with a Spanish transcript). OSHA will be posting additional materials on the Heat Illness Web page, including a lesson plan that employers can use to train their workers to stay safe in the heat and a heat index Smartphone app.



Where to File Section 11(c) Complaints?

- Anthony Rosa, Whistleblower Technical Advisor, Atlanta OSHA Regional Office

Currently, OSHA enforces 21 distinct whistleblower protection laws covering industries from construction and manufacturing to maritime, environmental, nuclear and aviation; even financial institutions. All of these complaints can be filed at any federal OSHA office. However, complaints under Section 11(c) of the OSHA Act in states that administer their own OSHA-approved plans should be filed with the respective State OSHA Office. In Region IV, there are 4 states that administer their own safety and health programs. They are Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina. If filing within Region's IV's federal states, Georgia, Florida, Alabama or Mississippi, all complaints, including Section 11(c) complaints, are handled by Federal OSHA.



Also, remember that Section 11(c) of the OSHA Act requires complainants to file complaints within 30 days from the adverse action, regardless of whether it is filed with a State OSHA office or with Federal OSHA. If a complaint is filed beyond the 30-day statutory deadline, it is usually deemed untimely, unless extenuating circumstances occur that warrant adjusting the filing date, e.g., debilitating illness, natural disaster or instances where evidence shows that the employer concealed or misled employees regarding their whistleblower protection rights. Examples of instances insufficient to justify a late filing date include not knowing the 30-day filing requirement, or filing unemployment or workers' compensation claims.

To provide a deeper understanding of OSHA's Whistleblower Programs' procedures, including procedures relating to Section 11(c) filing methods, the coming editions of Region IV e-News will explore the other 20 whistleblower protection laws. These laws are commonly known as "federal statutes" since all of them are handled exclusively by Federal OSHA. Please feel free to contact any of OSHA's offices for information on OSHA's Whistleblower Protection Program or visit www.whistleblowers.gov.

Identification & Prevention of Exposure to Poison Ivy and Poison Oak

- Clyde Payne, Area Director, Jackson OSHA Area Office

We all look forward to weekends with the family in the park, a camping trip, working in the spring garden planting or just cleaning up the yard. More often than not, we only think of the hazards of the equipment used while conducting landscaping activities. These hazards include: struck by objects; electrical shock while working in the vicinity of overhead power lines; falls from trees and ladders; and caught in chippers. What about the environmental hazards? All of these activities can bring us in contact with some of nature's hazards, like poison ivy and poison oak.



Poison ivy (left) can be found as a trailing vine that is 4 -10 inches, as a shrub up to 4 feet, or as a climbing vine that grows on trees or other support.

Poison Oak (right) is typically a shrub with leaves of three, similar to poison ivy. May have yellow or green flowers and clusters of green-yellow or white berries.



Both plants cause an allergic reaction. The rash is caused by the chemical in the sap of the plants called urushiol, which triggers an allergic response. Around 15% to 30% of people have no allergic response, but most people will become sensitized with repeated or more concentrated exposure to urushiol.

Keys to Prevention:

The best way to prevent the rash is to learn to identify and avoid the plants. When you cannot avoid contact with the plants, heavy clothing (long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and vinyl gloves) and barrier creams or lotions may help protect you.

Burning any of these plants is very dangerous as the urushiol can be inhaled in the smoke. Scrubbing with plain soap and cold water will remove the urushiol from skin if it is done within a few minutes of exposure, before it bonds. Ordinary laundering with laundry detergent will remove urushiol from most clothing, but not from leather or suede.

Fatal Facts

ACCIDENT SUMMARY

Accident Summary: Electrocution
Weather: Indoor Work
Type of Operation: Installing and Trouble-Shooting
Receptacle Outlets
Crew Size: 1
Safety and Health Program in Effect?: Yes
Competent Safety Monitor on Site?: Yes
Was the Worksite Inspected Regularly by the Employer?: Yes
Training and Education Provided?: Yes
Employee Job Title: Electrician/Foreman
Age/Sex: 52/Male
Experience at This Type Job: Certified Master Electrician
Time on the Project: 2 Months



Brief Description of Accident:

As part of trimming work, an employee was installing a new receptacle outlet located in the bathroom of an apartment unit that was in the process of being remodeled. He did not shut off the power at the circuit breaker prior to the installation. The employee was electrocuted after grabbing the two live wires that were energized with 110 volts and 15 amperes. The employee was found dead kneeling inside a bathroom cabinet next to the energized circuit. He was a foreman and the only employee conducting electrical work at the site.

Inspection Results:

As a result of the investigation, OSHA issued citations alleging one serious accident-related violation and two serious non-accident-related violations.

Accident Prevention Recommendations:

The employer shall not permit an employee to work on energized electrical circuits, unless the employee is protected against electric shock by de-energizing the circuit and grounding it or by guarding it effectively by insulation or other means. [29 CFR 1926.416(a)(1)].

Sources of Help:

- Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1926 - OSHA construction standards. Revised 7/1/2010. Stock number 869-072-00113-0.
- OSHA-funded free onsite consultation services are available in all states, and their contact information can be found on OSHA's Internet World Wide Web site at: <http://www.osha.gov/>.
- Courses relative to hazards in construction industry are offered by the OSHA Training Institute, 2020 South Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005-4102; phone (847) 297-4810.
- OSHA regulations, documents and technical information also are available on CD-ROM, which may be purchased from the Government Printing Office, phone (202) 512-1800 or fax (202) 512-2250. That information also is on OSHA's Internet World Wide Web site at: <http://www.osha.gov/>.
- OSHA Alliance with Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) Information can be found on OSHA's Internet World Wide Web site at: <http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/alliances/planet/planet.html>.

NOTE: The case that is described here was selected as being representative of fatalities that are caused by improper work practices. No special emphasis or priority is implied, nor is the case necessarily a recent occurrence. The legal aspects of the incident have been resolved, and the case is now closed.