Safe Operation of Golf Carts during Farm Science Review

Kent McGuire, CFAES Safety & Health Coordinator, Matt Sullivan, Molly Caren Ag Center / Farm Science Review, Nick Zachrich, Molly Caren Ag Center / Farm Science Review

A great number of golf carts are utilized during Farm Science Review. FSR committee members, CFAES personnel, vendors and attendees all use golf carts to increase their ability to access the grounds.

Safe practices are important and safety is everyone’s responsibility. It is very important that those operating a golf cart do so in a safe manner to minimize the risk of injury and protect equipment, facilities, and grounds.

The following information provides operational and safety guidelines to follow while operating a golf cart at Farm Science Review.

Requirements to Operate
Based on driving policies established by Ohio State University and FSR management, the following criteria must be met before operating a golf cart during Farm Science Review:
- Must have a valid drivers license.
- Be approved by FSR management.
- Follow all traffic laws and FSR policies.
- Operate golf cart in a safe and responsible manner.
- Consistently be aware of other pedestrians or vehicles when driving.

Potential Golf Cart Hazards
There are several hazards associated with golf cart operation during the event.
- Collision with another vehicle or object.
- Driving around blind corners or having an obstructed view.
- Injury from falling from the golf cart while in operation or mounting and dismounting.
- Injury to driver and passengers from arms and legs being outside the cab area.
- Injury to driver and passengers from shifting loads in a cargo area.
- Injury to pedestrians from being struck by the golf cart or from loads falling off the golf cart.
- Injury to the eyes from dust and insects while the golf cart is in motion.
- Distractions from cell phones or passengers.
- The golf cart getting out of control when driving on steep slopes, through dangerous terrain, or taking turns too fast.

A safe operator must be able to recognize potential hazards and react accordingly.

Defensive Driving
It is important to drive in a defensive manner. In many cases attendees or other operators may not be paying attention. Operators should:
- Stop at all “blind intersections” and then proceed with caution.
- Yield the right of way to pedestrians.
- Ensure other drivers have seen the golf cart prior to progressing. Operators must not assume that other vehicle drivers will give the “right of way”.
- Verify safety prior to all turns. Operators must look over the shoulder in the direction of travel prior to the turn to check for other vehicles or pedestrians.
Using a Golf Cart during Farm Science Review

- Before initial use, inspect machine by walking around it before starting. Check for flat tires, fluid leaks, or damage. Report any issues immediately.
- Understand how the controls function and how to operate the golf cart.
- Golf carts should be operated at a speed equivalent to walking but no faster than 15 mph.
- Operators are prohibited from talking on a cell phone or texting.
- Operators are prohibited from use of audio headsets or ear buds.
- Designated travel directions have been established and the center path is to be used by golf carts.

Passenger Safety

Operators are also responsible for the safety of their passengers. Safety requirements for passengers include:

- The number of passengers should not exceed the number of seats.
- Do not transport passengers in the cargo bed.
- Keeping head, legs and arms within the cab.
- Remain in seats while the golf cart is in motion.

Public Road Operation

When traveling on the road from the show site to other areas, operators must:

- Drive at a safe speed given the operating conditions. Excessive speed requires a greater stopping distance and increases risk of a collision.
- Follow the normal flow of traffic and do not pass shuttles.
- Be observant to pedestrians crossing the road at shuttle stops.
- Make sure any loads are properly secured.

Off-Road Operation

When golf carts are operated off of roadways, operators must:

- Stay on designated "off-road" paths as much as possible.
- Be alert to ground hazards, look ahead, watching carefully for holes, ruts, uneven surfaces, or drop offs.
- Be aware of overhead clearance obstructions such as tree limbs.
- Reduce speed according to the terrain and visibility conditions.