

Preparing Golf Car for Winter/Extended Storage

Consequences of not taking the time to prepare a golf car for the off-season often are not felt for months. But while courses in cold-weather climates are closed, or cars are being stored for an extended period, trouble can be brewing for vehicles that weren't properly prepped for a long period of inactivity.

For electric cars:

Turn the key switch to the "off" position, remove the key and leave the forward/reverse switch in the "neutral" position during storage. Then place the tow/run switch in the "tow" position. Note: since the battery warning light does not illuminate with the key in the "off" position and the tow switch in "tow," do not use the warning light as an indication of the batteries' charge state.

Clean the battery packs, tops and terminals using a battery acid neutralizer (1 cup of baking soda per 1 gallon of water). Check, clean, tighten, and treat battery terminal connections with a battery terminal protector spray. Tighten all battery cable connections. Check the water levels in each battery cell. If water is required, fill the cells to cover the plates, charge the set and then use distilled water to top off each cell at least 1/2 inch above the plates or to the level indicator.

Leave battery chargers plugged in during storage. If cars are equipped with an onboard computer, the OBC will automatically activate the charger when needed. If the battery charger is left plugged in during extended storage, check the electrolyte level and the charger function at least once a month to ensure that proper operation is maintained. To check charger function, disconnect the DC cord (stationary charger) from the vehicle or the AC cord (onboard charger) from the power source and wait five seconds before reconnecting. The charger is functioning properly if the ammeter indicates current.

If AC power is off for seven days or more, the OBC will not function or charge the vehicle again until it has been restarted. To restart the computer, make sure AC power has been restored, disconnect the DC cord (stationary charger) from the vehicle or the AC cord (onboard charger) from the power source, wait five seconds and reconnect.

Be sure to check the batteries and charger monthly to maintain the correct water level in the batteries and to ensure the charger is operating correctly during storage. Disconnect the batteries for the storage period if any of the following conditions exist: the charger cannot remain plugged in continuously, AC power will not be available during extended storage, or if electrolyte levels will not be maintained.

Check tire pressure and inflate to 18 to 20 PSI, or as called for in the owner's manual.

Do not engage the park brake, but secure the car from rolling.

For more information on extended storage or overall golf car maintenance, consult your owner's manual.