

Design tips for golf car storage

A suitably designed and managed storage facility can often make the difference between profit and loss in the operation of a golf car fleet.

For example: for electrically operated cars, a lack of adequate power in the storage shed sometimes will prevent the cars from completing a minimum of 36 holes a day. More frequent chargings mean heavy car downtime and loss of revenue. Also, this condition will seriously affect battery performance and life.

It is evident that adequate power is an absolute necessity. Under these circumstances, the power requirements for a new installation should be designed only by a qualified engineer. It is advised that any additional power demands that may be needed in the near future be integrated into the design. A later attempt to add power may be too difficult or costly.

Conversely, an existing facility should have its power output checked to assure its adequacy. Generally, the local utility or power company will perform this service at no cost.

The physical design of the facility is another factor that should be taken into consideration. The optimum shape should incorporate a flow pattern where a car never has to be placed in reverse. The majority of all golf car damage occurs in the maintenance shed, usually when the car is backing up.

To reduce this hazard, the facility should be designed so that each end of the building contains a door — one serves as the entrance, and the other as the exit. Ideally, the exit should be located at the end closest to the first tee. The first car in the night before will be the first car out the next day. This "first in-first out" concept prevents any need for reverse driving and allows the most-used cars to receive the longest possible charging time. This technique also assures that all cars will be driven approximately the same number of rounds during the year, a feature that increases battery life.

Crowding often breeds poor maintenance habits. It is axiomatic that the best-cared-for cars are always



situated in a clean, orderly shed. To avoid crowding, the facility should be somewhat longer than the length of the total number of cars being stored. Similarly, the structure should be as wide as the total number of rows of cars, plus one foot between rows. Rails can be erected between the rows to further reduce the possibility of car damage.

Another advantage of this configuration is that the chargers can be hung from the ceiling, a space-saving feature that augments the orderly appearance of the facility.

Bear in mind that a storage facility housing a fleet of 80 cars is safeguarding an investment of about \$150,000. Therefore, the facility should not be merely for storage. Rather, it should serve as the means that keeps the cars in operation. In this way, it will realize a return far beyond its initial cost. □

First in-first out storage building design, as exemplified by the facility at Bethpage State Park on New York's Long Island, assures that cars receive the longest possible charging time. It also prevents building up high mileage on some cars while others remain relatively unused.