

Putting golf cars to bed for the winter

Here are some helpful hints for storing golf cars during cold weather which should pay off in big dividends when spring arrives.

By OSCAR WISBEY

Investing a small amount of time properly storing golf cars during the winter will pay big dividends when spring arrives. When the first golfers of the season arrive at the course, the golf cars that were properly stored during the winter can quickly be put into profitable use.

There are numerous steps we recommend for winter storage, such as performance of the maintenance operations which are usually required only once a year. These include such things as changing the differential oil, changing the transmission oil (if the vehicle is so equipped), repacking wheel bearings, checking steering gear lubrication, etc.

Whether you are able to perform all these operations or not, here are some basic points about winter storage to be considered:

Building—You don't have to have a fancy building to properly store golf cars. The most important point is to be sure that wherever the vehicles are stored, the storage area is DRY. Moisture should be avoided if at all possible. Personally, I do not think it vital that the storage area be heated.

One way to solve the storage space problem is through on-end storage. In order to achieve this, a rack has been

designed (see Figure I) to put on the back of the golf car which is then tilted on end (see Figure II). Thus, by aligning car after car, five cars can be stored in an area which would be normally taken up by just two cars (see Figure III). The materials needed to achieve this include:

For each vehicle:

One stand—11 feet of 1-1/2 x 1-1/2 x 3/16 angle iron, four feet of 1-3/4 x 1/4 strap iron, and 12 inches of 2 x 4 (six inches each, see Figures I and II.)

For each row of golf cars:

One strap of 64 inches of 1-3/4 x 1/4 strap iron and 81 inches of 2 x 4 for bracing first car as shown in Figure II.

Batteries—Since storage space is at a premium in most cases, let me state that I do not think it essential to remove and store batteries. If you have the space, facilities and time, fine, but for those who don't, consider these following steps:

A.) Remove and thoroughly clean the battery. Next, clean and paint the battery frames. Inspect and clean the battery cables and, if necessary, replace those that are worn.

B.) Clean the terminals and apply a light application of petroleum jelly.

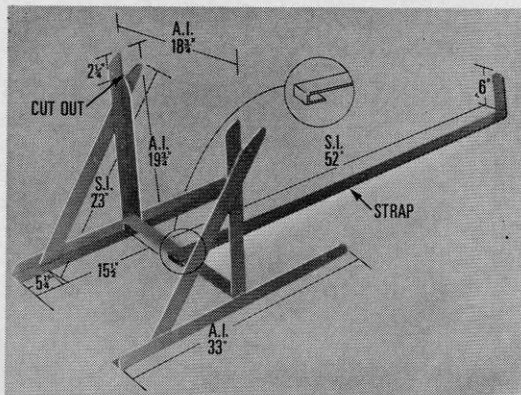
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Figure I—To stack cars on end in a row, book strap around center angle iron on one stand, upend vehicle on stand, and prop in place with 81-inch 2 x 4 as shown in Figure II.



C.) Replace the battery in the golf car and bring to a full charge. Add water to the full mark. Check every 30 days to see that the battery is holding its charge. If it drops to a specific gravity reading of 1230, recharge it. Remember, a fully charged battery won't freeze unless temperatures get down to 40 degrees below—or lower.

Tires—Ideally, it is best to store golf cars off the ground. That isn't practical for many fleet operations, but adding a couple of pounds tire pressure is a practical step. If you have time, check tires to see that they are free of sharp objects that might cause leaks during storage or when the vehicles are put back into use.

Gas Engines—The gasoline car requires a little more preparation for winter storage than does the electric car. Before putting the gasoline car into storage, the crankcase oil should be drained and refilled with good, clean oil. Then the engine should be operated for a few minutes to assure good distribution of the new oil. If the engine is equipped with an oil filter, the filter should be replaced.

The gasoline should be drained from the fuel tank, and the engine started and let run until all fuel is

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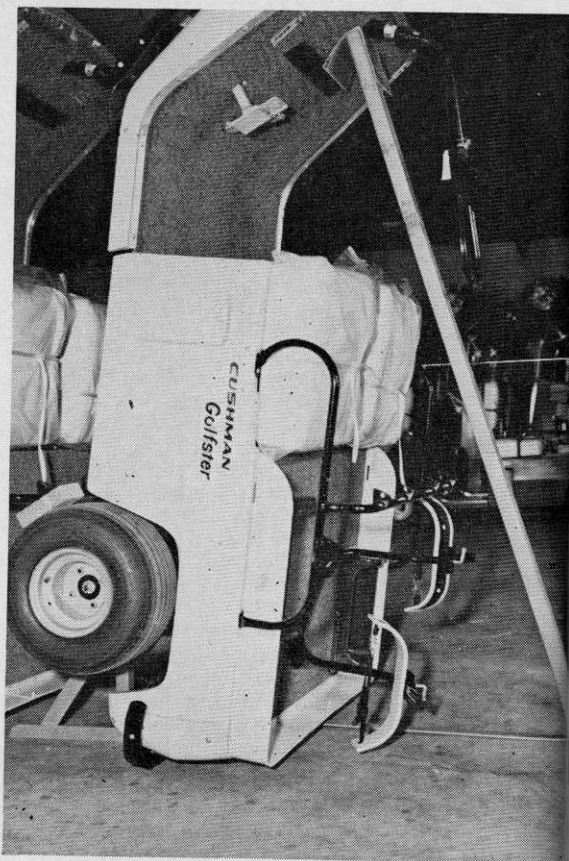


Figure II—Place next vehicle on stand and lean against first, placing short 2 x 4's between each rear tire and backrest of next car as shown above.

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Figure III—Using this method, five golf cars can be stored in an area which would otherwise only accommodate two golf cars.

burned from the carburetor. This eliminates the possibility of gasoline evaporation, which leaves a varnish deposit.

Spark plugs should be removed and a small amount of engine oil inserted into the spark plug holes. Then the engine should be rotated a few revolutions. This will assure good lubrication of the cylinder walls and prevent the possibility of rust due to condensation. The spark plugs should then be replaced, after first checking to see that they are still in good condition.

Bodies—The exterior of the golf car should be thoroughly cleaned before it is stored. Use of hot water under high pressure and special detergents that cut grease and grime—but not

paint—is ideal. Just plain scrubbing is a practical substitute. The upholstery should be cleaned and necessary touch-up painting done prior to storage. Even though today's fiberglass and metal bodies are vastly superior to those of the past, they still need some attention. Winter is the time to do it.

There are other areas to check when golf cars are inoperative, such as brakes, foot and selector switches, electrical circuits, wheel bearings, and the like. Often these only require inspections to see that they are operating in proper condition.

Finally, winter is a fine time to look over and tighten up those unsung heroes of any golf car—the nuts and the bolts. ●