



Stakes show golfers where to enter and exit the cart path. The stakes are moved multiple times per week to minimize damage from concentrated traffic.

CURTAILING CART DAMAGE

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During the pandemic, golfers have showed their appreciation for the freedom to escape to the golf course. Rounds and revenue received a substantial increase in 2020 and that trend continues early this year. While this is a welcome and needed sight for the golf industry, many courses still have four carts per foursome and the additional traffic has damaged turf. The issues are most prominent where carts leave the path to enter the fairway, near fairway bunkers and where carts reenter the path near the green. The damage is more prominent during winter in the West because turf recovery is slow. Here are a few tips to mitigate the damage:

The Gate System

This system's success is born in its simplicity. Two stakes near the tee mark where carts should leave the cart path and two stakes located about 75 yards from the green alert golfers where to leave the turf and rejoin the cart path. It seems to work well at both private and public facilities. The stakes are moved as needed to spread out turf wear.

Routine Aeration

The benefits from different forms of [fairway aeration](#) typically only last four to six weeks, or even less in areas that receive concentrated traffic. Utilize slicing, solid-tine aeration, and both deep and shallow tines to combat compaction in areas with heavy cart traffic. Conduct these operations twice monthly, if possible, in localized areas. Use small-diameter tines during periods of slow growth and switch to larger-diameter tines when the turf is growing aggressively.

Spot Fertility

Increase nitrogen fertility in high-traffic areas by 50%-100% or more. Focus on a combination of highly soluble and [slow-release nitrogen](#) sources such as methylene urea.

If your course is struggling to recover from cart damage, please reach out to a [USGA agronomist in the West Region](#) for more information on these strategies or any other agronomic practices.



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