

# Petrol versus electric golf carts – Which makes ECONOMIC SENSE?

The debate concerning whether electric golf carts might be better than those powered by internal combustion engines has raged ever since carts were first imported into South Africa in the early 1980s. Both camps have valid reasons for their preferences, but if it is about saving money, it is clear that volts beat horsepower.

**Before we look** at the costs of running a fleet of carts, it is worth considering the pros and cons of petrol and electric carts. There is no question that the noise factor is important, and petrol carts, even the best of them, are relatively noisy. Another problem faced by clubs that run fleets of petrol-driven carts is petrol theft. Even a club that can honestly say that it has a fool-proof security system in place cannot discount the fumes and emissions, not to mention the danger associated with fire risk.

There are well-documented cases of plucky petrol vehicles, as long as they are well maintained, trundling along for 20 years or more. They do need less storage space, as 'petrol heads' will point out, because the recharging facility needed for electric carts does take up some room.

But assuming that well-ventilated garaging (needed for all carts) is available, once total maintenance costs are calculated, electric carts come out on top – by a hefty margin. Also the down-time involved in servicing petrol carts is far higher (they require servicing every 100 hours, compared to their electric counterparts needing a service every two to three

months). The daily maintenance needed for electric carts, checking battery terminals and water levels, takes very little time. ■



Alex Ackron, CSE's national manager, Turf Division, points out that running a fleet of electric carts makes economic sense.

## Petrol vs electric running cost

*Based on three years and an average of 18 rounds of golf per month per cart.*

DESCRIPTION	PETROL	ELECTRIC
Maintenance cost (service parts only)	R10 260.00	R96.00
Petrol cost (1x 26.5 tank per month)	R6 868.80	R0.00
Once-off deionizer cost	R0.00	R1 000.00
Battery costs (replacement after 3 to 4 years)	R0.00	R9 000.00
	<b>R17 128.80</b>	<b>R10 096.00</b>
Cost per month per cart	R475.80	R280.44
Cost per month on 65 carts	R30 927.00	R18 228.89
Cost per month on 65 carts for 36 months	R1 113 372.00	R656 240.00
<b>Saving on electric over 36 months (65 carts)</b>		<b>R457 132.00</b>

*This calculation does not include the labour hour to service the carts. Keep in mind that it will take one person one hour to service a petrol cart apposed to 15 minutes to service an electric cart.*



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