

# Smart Cart Collisions Exploration

Siddharth Nema

SPH4U0

Ms. Ally

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# 1 Collision Observations

## The Five Collision Scenarios:

1. **Collision 1:** Both carts equal mass | Bounce of magnets | Cart 2 (Blue) at rest
2. **Collision 2:** Both carts equal mass | Bounce of magnets | Roll towards each other
3. **Collision 3:**  $m_2 = 2m_1$  | Bounce of magnets | Cart 2 (Blue) at rest
4. **Collision 4:**  $m_2 = 2m_1$  | Bounce of magnets | Roll towards each other
5. **Collision 5:** Both carts equal mass | Stick together after | Cart 2 (Blue) at rest

Table 1: Observed Data for Cart 1 (Red) in all Five Collision Scenarios

Collision Number	Cart 1 Mass (kg)	Cart 1 $\vec{v}_i$ (m/s)	Cart 1 $\vec{v}_f$ (m/s)	Cart 1 $\vec{p}_i$ (kg · m/s)	Cart 1 $\vec{p}_f$ (kg · m/s)
Collision 1	0.270	0.911	0.000	0.246	0.000
Collision 2	0.270	0.455	-0.396	0.123	-0.107
Collision 3	0.270	0.580	0.000	0.157	0.000
Collision 4	0.270	0.631	-0.520	0.170	-0.140
Collision 5	0.270	0.692	0.341	0.187	0.092

Table 2: Observed Data for Cart 2 (Blue) in all Five Collision Scenarios

Collision Number	Cart 2 Mass (kg)	Cart 2 $\vec{v}_i$ (m/s)	Cart 2 $\vec{v}_f$ (m/s)	Cart 2 $\vec{p}_i$ (kg · m/s)	Cart 2 $\vec{p}_f$ (kg · m/s)
Collision 1	0.270	0.000	0.885	0.000	0.239
Collision 2	0.270	-0.476	0.386	-0.129	0.104
Collision 3	0.532	0.000	0.321	0.000	0.171
Collision 4	0.532	-0.616	0.000	0.328	0.000
Collision 5	0.270	0.000	0.343	0.000	0.093

Table 3: Total Momentum and Kinetic Energy in all Five Collision Scenarios

Collision Number	Total $\vec{p}$ Before (kg · m/s)	Total $\vec{p}$ After (kg · m/s)	Total $E_k$ Before (J)	Total $E_k$ After (J)
Collision 1	0.246	0.239	0.112	0.106
Collision 2	-0.006	-0.003	0.059	0.041
Collision 3	0.157	0.171	0.045	0.027
Collision 4	-0.157	-0.140	0.155	0.037
Collision 5	0.187	0.185	0.065	0.032

## 2 Explosion Observations

The Two Explosion Scenarios:

1. **Explosion 1:** Two carts of equal mass “explode” away from each other
2. **Explosion 2:** Two carts of unequal mass “explode” away from each other

Table 4: Observed Data for Cart 1 (Red) in Both Explosion Scenarios

Explosion Number	Cart 1 Mass (kg)	Cart 1 $\vec{v}_i$ (m/s)	Cart 1 $\vec{v}_f$ (m/s)	Cart 1 $\vec{p}_i$ (kg · m/s)	Cart 1 $\vec{p}_f$ (kg · m/s)
Explosion 1	0.270	0.000	0.796	0.000	0.215
Explosion 2	0.270	0.000	0.945	0.000	0.255

Table 5: Observed Data for Cart 2 (Blue) in Both Explosion Scenarios

Collision Number	Cart 2 Mass (kg)	Cart 2 $\vec{v}_i$ (m/s)	Cart 2 $\vec{v}_f$ (m/s)	Cart 2 $\vec{p}_i$ (kg · m/s)	Cart 2 $\vec{p}_f$ (kg · m/s)
Explosion 1	0.270	0.000	-0.848	0.000	-0.229
Explosion 2	0.532	0.000	-0.506	0.000	-0.269

Table 6: Total Momentum and Kinetic Energy in Both Explosion Scenarios

Collision Number	Total $\vec{p}$ Before (kg · m/s)	Total $\vec{p}$ After (kg · m/s)	Total $E_k$ Before (J)	Total $E_k$ After (J)
Explosion 1	0.000	-0.014	0.000	0.183
Explosion 2	0.000	-0.014	0.000	0.189

## 3 Collision Analysis

1. Explain if your results show momentum being conserved after each of the 5 collisions.

Looking at Table 3, it is evident that momentum is not perfectly conserved as the total momentum before is not equal to the total momentum after the collision. However, taking a closer look at the table values, it reveals that while momentum is not perfectly conserved, it is objectively close to being conserved. Additionally, the conservation of momentum applies to a closed system, which was not the case of the experiment as

there were external interactions with the system. The main reasons for why momentum is not conserved is due to friction, and external forces acting on the carts. The equation for momentum ( $\vec{p} = m\vec{v}$ ) shows that momentum is dependant on velocity, therefore changes in velocity directly cause a change in momentum. As a result, the decrease in velocity due to friction causes a lower momentum, which is why momentum is not conserved. The other factor is external forces acting on the carts which creates acceleration and a non zero net force. When a cart is pushed, it is difficult to push in such a way that there is no acceleration. Due to the acceleration, the velocity of the carts are altered again, where in this case their values increase the momentum, since the velocity increased. The combination of the two factors cause momentum to not be conserved, however the data collected, still reveals that momentum is mostly conserved.

**2. Clasify each of the 5 collisions as elastic or inelastic.**

Collision 1: The collision is elastic as both momentum and kinetic energy were mostly conserved.

Collision 2: The collision is elastic as both momentum and kinetic energy were mostly conserved.

Collision 3:

Collision 4:

Collision 5:

**3. What general trend, patterns or special cases do you see in your data regarding momentum or kinetic energy.**

## **4 Explosion Analysis**

**1. Describe what you notice about the total momentum of the system before and after the explosion.**

Since both carts started at rest their initial momentums were 0. After the explosion, in both scenarios the final momentum was the same, but momentum was not conserved

as explained previously.

2. **Describe how the carts final velocities are different depending on their masses. How would this relate to predicting the final velocities for a cannon ball and cannon, after the cannon is fired.**

The carts final velocities are dependant on their masses such that if an objects mass increases, its velocity decreases. In the case of the second explosion scenario, since the blue cart was twice the mass of the red cart, its final velocity was around half of the red carts final velocity. This proportional relationship could be applied to the cannon and cannon ball where finding the factor by which the cannon is heavier than the cannon ball. By knowing the mass factor, cannon would have a final velocity of the cannon ball divided by the mass factor, or vice versa, where the cannon ball would have a final velocity of the cannon times the mass factor.