TEMPORARY AND AGENCY WORKERS GET FULL TIME RIGHTS

The Government has announced proposals to give both temporary and agency workers the same employment rights as their permanent colleagues after 12 weeks employment.

At present, the UK has one of the more unregulated regimes in respect of temporary and agency workers. This, it is argued, assists with labour market flexibility which itself has led to the highest levels of employment in the UK since records began.

The counter argument is that temporary and agency workers rarely accrue employment rights and often receive far poorer pay and conditions than their permanent counterparts. This it is argued is unfair as it means that temps and agency staff receive poorer remuneration but do what is effectively the same job.

Under the proposal, which was agreed between the Government, the CBI and trade unions, after 12 weeks work temporary and agency workers will be entitled to the same pro-rata pay and conditions as full time workers. The proposal affects items such as pay, including holiday pay. The agreement specifically does not cover sick pay or pension contributions.

The proposal is likely to have a significant impact on golf clubs, many of whom utilise temporary staff in the busy summer months between April and October.

While a date for implementation has not been agreed, Course Managers, Chairmen of Green or Greens Convenors alike will require to look in some detail at their pay structures and, in particular, whether they are paying any temporary or agency staff on a like for like basis with their fulltime equivalents. Once the Bill has been passed, temporary and agency staff will be able to ask their managers for equivalent pay to their full time contemporaries.

Clubs will have to consider to either increase their employment budgets or employ proportionately lower numbers of temporary staff.

At present, there are estimated to be around 1.4 million agency workers in the UK.

Appropriate anti avoidance measures will be brought in. Therefore it will not be possible to make changes, such as altering job descriptions, in order to justify lower rates of pay.

We await with interest the precise details of the measures and a precise date for implementation.
Using cheaper red diesel on the golf course to save money is fine - but don’t take it on the road, warns Mike Beardall

Red Diesel has been under the spotlight since changes in legislation tightened up the rules relating to use on the road.

This has created a grey area in the minds of many golf course managers who wonder if they can still drive their red diesel-fuelled vehicles on the road – even a short distance between courses.

The answer is “No”.

Only agricultural contractors and farmers moving between farms to carry out agricultural or horticultural work can use red diesel on the road.

Vehicles powered by red diesel on the golf course have to stay there. A trip between courses on a stretch of public highway in such a vehicle is no longer allowed for red diesel users.

What is Red Diesel? It’s simply ordinary diesel that has been dyed red and has a chemical agent added that can be detected by VOSA (Vehicle and Operator Services Agency) or HM Revenue and Customs inspectors who suspect it has been misused.

And it is much cheaper – about half the price of ordinary diesel, because the Government reduced tax on this fuel for those users deemed “essential” to producing food and working on land and building sites.

Red diesel has been a contentious issue among contractors – many working on golf courses. “We can transport our diggers, dumpers and tractors by lorry and trailer to the site if they are to use red diesel,” said Barry Pace, Contracts Manager of Speedcut Contractors of Oxford.

“Taking those vehicles on the road, even between sites, is strictly not allowed any more.”

Agricultural contractors have had just as many questions because they assumed they were able to use red diesel for vehicles on the road if they were on their way to a farm to deliver supplies to carry out farm work. But again the answer is “No”.

“The Government has changed many of the rules regarding red diesel,” said Jill Hewitt, Chief Executive of NAAC (National Association of Agricultural Contractors).

“There was a lot of confusion when the new rules came into operation on April 1 – but a clear set of guidelines has now been issued.”

Fined after mowing rugby pitch

The IOG has issued a warning to members that the use of red diesel in tractors and certain ride-on equipment previously lawful on public highways while carrying out recreational or amenity grounds work, or landscaping, is now illegal.

It says: “Following changes to The Excepted Vehicles (Amendment of Schedule 1 to the Hydrocarbon Oils Duty Act 1979) Order 2007, vehicles not entitled to the use of red diesel on public roads include those involved with the maintenance of recreational facilities and landscaping. Offenders can be fined £250.

“The term ‘Recreation’ is not fully defined by the HM Revenue and Customs help desk - but a farmer using his tractor running on red diesel en route
from mowing a rugby pitch has been fined.”

The entitlement to the use of rebated gas oil (red diesel) is restricted to the use of agricultural vehicles engaged in agricultural, horticultural and forestry operations on the owner’s land or by his contractor when using the following vehicles on public roads: Agricultural tractors and agricultural materials-handling vehicles plus light agricultural vehicles (not exceeding 1,000 kgs and constructed to seat only the driver).

In addition, agricultural handlers may also use red diesel while cutting verges bordering public roads, and cutting trees and hedges bordering public roads.

But contractors looking after public amenity areas, including verges and roundabouts, cannot use red diesel.

Jill Hewitt said: “We are delighted it has been made clear that contractors are allowed to use red diesel to move between agricultural operations but we must not abuse our privilege and I would urge all operators to take note of the Memorandum of Agreement issued by the NAAC, NFU and Confederation of Forest Industries.”

Golf courses saving money

On golf courses the massive savings on fuel by using red diesel pays dividends – but Course Managers must be aware of the ban on using red diesel vehicles on the road.

“I would err on the side of caution with all vehicles running on red diesel,” said Cal Callaby, Workshop Manager at Celtic Manor in Newport, South Wales.

“Don’t gamble on taking a vehicle on a road at any time with red diesel in it. The rules are quite clear – no vehicle used on a golf course running on red diesel can be taken on the public highway.”

Celtic Manor, which opened its new £16 million pound 2010 Ryder Cup course for the Wales Open in May, runs more than 100 vehicles on red diesel on the course.

“These include tractors, grass-cutting machinery, ride-ons and utility vehicles such as the Toro Workman. Cal keeps a list of which vehicles run on red diesel and which on white so there is no confusion.

“We save a lot of money using red diesel because it is half the price of white diesel. In our case we get through 4,000 litres a month at this time of year – and in the winter this goes down to 4,000 litres in total between December and April.”

Red diesel on golf courses must be stored in clearly marked tanks that say: “Not for use on the road”.

And beware putting red diesel in your diesel car for road use.

Police who stop vehicles and call HM Revenue and Customs (or VOSA) officers to do a test which proves positive can impound the vehicle – and take it away to be destroyed.

Heavy penalties and a criminal record are the result.

USEFUL WEBSITES:
www.hmrc.gov.uk
www.naac.co.uk.
www.dvla.gov.uk
www.vosa.gov.uk

HM Revenue and Customs helpline: 0845 010 9000

CAN I APPEAL AGAINST PENALTIES IMPOSED?

HM Revenue and Customs say there is a formal two-stage process to deal with appeals against decisions.

Here is their statement:

If you disagree with any of the following:
• the terms offered for restoration of a vehicle (or engine) we have seized
• our refusal to restore any vehicle (or engine) we have seized
• the imposition of a civil penalty or civil evasion penalty or
• the assessment.

You may request a formal departmental review. Your request should set out the reasons for your disagreement and must be submitted in writing to your local officer, within 45 days of our original written decision.

The review will be undertaken by an independent Review Officer, who will not have been involved in the decision. The review will be completed within 45 days of your written request and the outcome will be notified to you in writing.

If you disagree with our review decision you will have a further 30 days to lodge your appeal with the VAT and duties tribunal. You may not lodge an appeal with that tribunal until our review decision is given.

Cases involving criminal proceedings are not subject to these appeal arrangements.

More info: www.hmrc.gov.uk
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...whatever the season...

...we’ve got the disease control programme you can trust

The Syngenta range of turf fungicides has been specifically developed to provide outstanding levels of disease control. Adopting a programmed approach - rotating Heritage, Banner MAXX and Daconil Weather Stik through the season - can deliver cost-effective, reliable and sustainable turf disease control - now, and in the future. Combined with the independently proven advice from www.greencast.co.uk you can be confident of applying the right product, at the right time, to maintain the ultimate turf.

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Programmes to beat turf disease

Syngenta Technical Manager, Simon Barnaby, reports

Turf diseases are becoming more aggressive – hitting earlier and going on for longer. Yet players’ demand is for ever higher quality turf, all year round. Both turf and turf managers are under increasing pressure to deliver.

Turf managers need to adopt new strategies to cope with disease, incorporating the latest new products and the most up to date technology to achieve the best possible results.

Fungicide selection

Turf fungicides work in a variety of ways; targeting disease at different points in their life cycle and with different modes of action. Syngenta fungicide programmes are designed to select the optimum choice for any disease, at any stage in the season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Chlorothalonil</th>
<th>Azoxystrobin</th>
<th>Propiconazole</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
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<td>Curative</td>
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<td>Early Curative</td>
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<td>Anti-sporulant</td>
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Diseases on label

- Fusarium Patch
- Dollar Spot
- Anthracnose
- Red Thread
- Red Thread
- Take-All Patch
- Leaf Spot
- Fairy Ring
- Rust

Additional effects

- Leaf spot
- Leaf spot

Preventative fungicides, such as Heritage and Banner MAXX, have proven most effective in maintaining turf quality when applied just after disease infection has taken place, but before any symptoms are visible.

Where disease symptoms are already present, a fungicide with a powerful curative and eradicant activity, such as Daconil Weather Stik, must be used.

Well-timed preventative fungicide applications, using risk forecasts on www.greencast.ie, can deliver the longest protection from effective products with a reduced number of applications and lower cost.

Fungicide programme facts:

- Select fungicides for appropriate disease activity
- Change modes of action for each application
- Develop a full ITM package
- Remember the rule Rotation, Rotation, Rotation
- Up to the minute weather forecasting
- Advance warning of turf diseases
- Integrated turf management plans
- Independent advice from STRI

Programme choice

Armed with the knowledge of how each fungicide works, the diseases it will effectively control and the optimum time for its use, turf managers can develop a comprehensive programme to counter disease risk when it arises.

Potential risk periods and example fungicide solutions

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<tr>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
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<th>JUN</th>
<th>JUL</th>
<th>AUG</th>
<th>SEP</th>
<th>OCT</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fusarium Patch</td>
<td>Anthracnose</td>
<td>Dollar Spot</td>
<td>Brown Patch</td>
<td>Take-All Patch</td>
<td>Leaf Spot</td>
<td>Fairy Ring</td>
<td>Rust</td>
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All Syngenta fungicides control a broad spectrum of turf diseases. An application of Heritage to counter the threat of anthracnose in June, for example, will also control Fusarium Patch (Microdochium Patch), Brown Patch, Fairy Ring, Take-All patch and other diseases.

Fungicide rotation

- Heritage
  - Mode of action: QOI
  - Fungicide programme facts:
    - Select fungicides for appropriate disease activity
    - Change modes of action for each application
    - Develop a full ITM package
    - Remember the rule Rotation, Rotation, Rotation
- Daconil Weather Stik
  - Mode of action: Multi-site
- Banner MAXX
  - Mode of action: DMI
  - Fungicide programme facts:
    - Up to the minute weather forecasting
    - Advance warning of turf diseases
    - Integrated turf management plans
    - Independent advice from STRI

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The construction or renovation of a golf course is a major investment for any club or developer. Through thorough planning with the architect in the design phase, the owners of the new facility can end up with a truly sustainable course that has been built using the natural terrain and resources that already exist on site. Choosing a good construction company with a proven history of utilising these natural features and build to the design specification is a must.

Turning a 2D plan into a 3D course is a real art. Analysis and then implementation of plans drawn up by an architect is key to fulfilling the final specification and making the most of what already exists. Shipping in many tonnes of extra material to build a highly contoured course is not deemed as carbon friendly in this modern age of "being green", nor is it cost effective and does not lend to being sustainable. The R&A themselves define the sustainability of golf courses in terms of development and management as “optimising the playing quality of the golf course in harmony with the conservation of its natural environment under economically sound and socially responsible management”. This seems logical, but how many courses built in boom years of the 1980s and 90s considered the environment and the effects of this construction on the surrounding landscape? Very few, one would imagine.

Mark Dunning, of Essex-based construction company, Grassform, ensures that his company’s approach to golf course construction is the same as their approach to any project.

“We will always consider the environmental impact and work with the architect and/or engineers to provide solutions to this effect. Making use of natural landscapes is one way to reduce the need to unnecessarily move soil around in developing course shape and terrain,” said Mark.

“By carefully grading soils and using them for a variety of areas, a minimal amount of extra material is needed and as it’s on site, why not use it?” he added.

Trees also provide a convenient aspect with which to challenge a player, so removal should only be carried out unless ultimately necessary. The approach should be to use any natural resource to make the golf course aesthetically pleasing to the eye but also provide a stiff test of skill and power for a wide range of players.

A flat and lifeless course would be very boring to play on after all, and would generate little challenge for higher-level golfers.

The aim is always to leave a golf club with a course that is as interesting as possible, both in terms of its visual aspect and so too its playability. A prime example of their work can be seen at Luton Hoo’s recently opened 18 hole course where the company were contracted with construction within a Capability Brown-listed landscape.

Working for main contractor Cardy Construction, Grassform’s team were faced with building across a varied terrain, using their skills in landscaping to make use of natural materials and topography. The fact that within the Capability Brown areas minimal excavations and drainage were allowed (due to its historical significance) meant for some interesting shaping of banks and levels to increase the visual aspect while still providing suitable falls for water flow. The addition of wild flowering mixes around parts of the course gave a natural landscape feel to areas of the site that were previously barren land.

Identifying the needs of a course will ultimately depend on its location and type. A parkland course will benefit from multiple tree and shrub varieties to offer colour differences throughout the year, whereas a links course may utilise resources such as rocks or sand dunes to provide a more interesting aspect. The same can be said of heathland courses, where gorse can be used not only as the division between each hole, but
also as a nasty trap for the wayward ball, often providing interesting extraction techniques from frustrated golfers.

Although not always in the remit of the landscape contractor, exciting use of groundcover plants and shrubs can provide testing lies and angles of approach. If these resources are already in place, then a reduced environmental cost of introducing these can be achieved. Of course, design of a course should usually include this diversity where possible as it aids in the feeling that the golf course has always been there and is part of a natural landscape, when of course it is not and is there as a leisure facility.

The term landscaping does not just relate to “soft” aspects such as plants and soil. Hard landscaping is also a key ingredient to the feel of a course, and this can include areas such as tarmac, buildings or wooden structures such as steps or retaining walls. Building such hard landscape structures not only adds to the feel but also provides shelter and access near greens, fairways and paths.

The use of buggies can be a major concern for many courses come the winter months, when the condition of the ground often deteriorates to such an extent that these along with powered or even conventional trolley use is banned. Not only does this limit the potential use of the course for those who cannot haul a bag or trolley around, but it is also irksome for members who often pay high membership fees for their golf.

Coombe Hill Golf Club experienced this problem. The undulating course had an existing soil base buggy path system but heavy rain had caused many parts to be washed away, resulting in a ban on buggy use. The club turned to Grassform to completely renew their path system by installing a tarmac layout with a small stone top to ensure all round usage would be possible. The end result weaves between tress and follows the fairways as much as possible, allowing golfers as close to their shot but still providing a pleasing drive around the course between each stroke.

Lakes and ponds are other interesting aspects of any golf course. Courses featuring water are not only more risky to play given the penalty stroke that they attract, but they add to the natural aspect of any course and offer potential for water storage and harvesting.

Indeed, the subject of water harvesting in golf courses is one that is sure to rear its head more with future designs given increasing water costs and the fear of global warming. It makes sense to fashion lakes and ponds that can store water for irrigation rather than pay for mains or the building of a massive out of sight storage reservoir. Utilising natural shapes in the course is the ideal way to create these storage areas, and when combined with drainage outfalls then this can lead to a good source of usable water. Being sustainable, this system will reduce costs and is something that Mark is keen to promote.

“Being green conscious is something that we are enthusiastic about and by implementing schemes such as water harvesting this will allow golf courses to be more self sufficient and sustainable. We also tend to try and use materials from a renewable source where possible, reducing our impact within the construction phase of the build,” explained Mark.

Grassform Ltd specialise in the creation of golf courses, sportsfields and landscapes.

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Greenkeeper International 37
The BIGGA Training & Development Manual

FREE USE FOR MEMBERS

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Designed around a theme of 18 holes users can gain access to training records, job specifications, job descriptions, sample contracts of employment, appraisal forms and details of continuing development.

How to access the BIGGA Training & Development Manual

1. Go to the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk
2. Click on the Members area, the Jobs page or the Education page and click on the BIGGA Training Manual link.
3. Enter your login details and select the BIGGA Training & Development Manual from the left hand menu.
4. The Training Manual will load and the user can click on Enter the Site to view a welcome video or can select 1–9 or 10–18 on the top menu bar.
5. You can progress through the manual hole by hole or go straight to the hole you wish to view. You can also skip to holes 10–18.
6. When you select a hole you will be presented with a window that explains what that hole is about. You can then select from the bottom tabs, video or sub-text (downloadable documents and links).
7. When clicking on a downloadable document it will automatically open in your default word processor. This can then be amended, updated and saved to your computer’s hard disk or printed and filed in your personnel files.

The Bigga Training & Development Manual, sponsored by John Deere, is an invaluable tool for everyone working within the greenkeeping industry.
BIGGA is actively involved in raising the standard of Greenkeeper Training. The Association is a member of the Greenkeepers’ Training Committee and strives to enhance the level of education through various means, including Section, Regional and National workshops, seminars and conferences.

The range and quality of training now available throughout the UK means there is a training course for every greenkeeper. This should improve the quality of greenkeeping and help to produce better quality golf courses to the benefit of all within the industry.

Golf Course Managers should ensure that their staff are trained to the highest standards. This begins by selecting a training provider that meets the criteria laid down by the GTC. There is a clear link between education, training and economic success and all clubs should invest in the education of their staff.

Sami Collins
Head of Learning & Development
British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association
Tel: 01347 833800
Email: sami@bigga.co.uk
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Information: Full-time National Certificate in Greenkeeping: SVQ level II and GTC Manual (Day and Block Release); SVQ Level 3 Sportsfair & SVQ Level 3 Fast Track (Day and Block Release); SVQ level III in Service Engineering, full range of Amenity Horticulture, Landscaping and other land based subjects at HNC and HNC, National Certificate and SVQ Levels; Short Course - FITA, Chainsaw, Fist Aid, First Aid.
A full list of GTC approved training providers can be obtained from the GTC.

The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) are continually reviewing the approved status of training providers offering greenkeeper training courses.

For more information contact the GTC on: 01347 838640 or visit: www.the-gtc.co.uk

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