

Irrigation Maintenance Ideas

Golf course irrigation can be a very time-consuming task with newer systems becoming larger and more complex. Even the existing systems cost a lot of time. To help free up some hours, here are a few methods you may want to incorporate into maintenance routines.

On a daily basis:

- Use your entire crew to help spot trouble. The fairway mowers and the rough mowers see every square foot out on the course and are a good source of information for wet spots and dry areas. A few wire flags on each vehicle go a long way in time spent searching for any particular reported trouble spot (a worker spots something and simply plants a flag in the ground and reports it). A single wire flag also prevents a lot of ruts in a hidden wet spot.

- Cup-cutting personnel provide excellent feedback on the moisture content of the greens' soil. A small amount of time in training to identify wet plugs is a good investment.

- Tune in to reading dew patterns. If you can spot problems the first thing in the morning, chances are you will only miss one watering because you have all day to make the repair.

- And don't forget the obvious; cart paths will show "what was watered last night."

Also periodically check your irrigation equipment. Check your pump station for adequate pressure. Install a pressure gauge for a quick visual if need be. Keep your filters clean and lubricate the motors and bearings. A pressure gauge attached to a quick coupler key is a convenient tool for spot checks on the course.

If you have a central controller, test the communication to the field satellites. Look at your field controllers to see if they are keeping correct time. Send a signal to your station to check the sprinklers. Check each sprinkler for proper rotation and proper pattern from nozzles. A quick removal of a nozzle obstruction can keep your turf from stressing and turning brown.

Using these techniques may save some time and trouble for the one who is responsible for the irrigation system. A routine of checks and tests can involve more than just that person. And, most importantly, your golf course can remain green and growing.

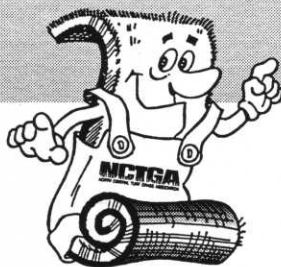
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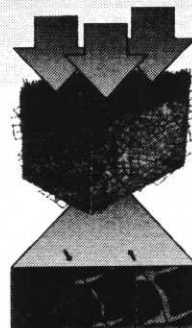
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