

Help on the way

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A golf course is a place where people come to enjoy themselves, get a little exercise, and socialize with friends. Most don't think of it as a place of potential danger. The superintendent can do much to enhance the safety of those on the course, both employees and players.

Eighty percent of all heart attacks give the recipient an identifiable warning. Heavy sweating, chest pain or pressure, numbness or tingling in the left arm, jaw pain or a feeling of indigestion; any combination of these symptoms can spell heart attack. These symptoms alone do not mean a person is having a heart attack at that moment, just that one may be on the way soon.

Always alert the Emergency Medical Services nearest your course. Have their phone number available at several locations, and, if you have a mobile phone, keep this and other key numbers handy.

In the event of an emergency, call the EMS; they are the patient's best hope. You now have three to five minutes to make a difference between life and death. Encourage the person to sit down right where he is. Do not try to move him unless it is essential. Make the patient comfortable and give him oxygen if available. Loosen his collar and belt and encourage him to relax. Anything you can do to keep the patient calm will help.

Finally, if the person loses consciousness or passes out, you

should start CPR immediately. The victim has only two to six minutes once the heart stops beating to avoid a life threatening injury. You will make a difference if you start CPR right away. As part of your spring safety training, get several employees certified in CPR.

For a real-life example, read of one New Jersey superintendent's experience.

Envision this scenario: It is a hot summer afternoon, and you, the course superintendent, are making the rounds. Suddenly in the distance you hear a panicky scream, "Help me, help, please help me!" You turn to see an elderly gent lying on his back in the middle of the fairway with his son kneeling beside him.

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You arrive almost instantaneously—only to realize the man has had a heart attack and died on the spot. Suddenly you realize you don't know CPR, and the only thing you can do to help is make a phone call. You don't even know if you have any employees who know CPR, so all you can do is wait and feel helpless and what's worse, useless! It feels pretty bad. Trust me, it happened. The point here is, with an increased number of golfers in the country, you must also account for a rising number of golf course fatalities. Whether this be from heart attack, lightning strike, or a blow from a ball doesn't matter. The fact is, these lives can be saved if a properly trained person arrives on the scene soon enough.

Many factors must be included in this medical equation,

but all add up to one solution, *education!* After this mid-summer fiasco at our course, I suggested to our Board of Directors that we try annually to train *all* golf course employees in CPR and First Aid; they agreed. A simple call to our local hospital made it possible for all 25 employees to learn both, free of charge and on site. Now rangers, pro shoppers and grounds employees know what to do when an emergency occurs. But this is not where it ends. This education must be integrated into a response sequence in order to have success.

Our plan goes as follows: The employee closest to the emergency goes to the victim, determines the situation and proceeds with CPR if necessary. A good first aid kit, including oxygen and a blanket, are rushed to the scene by a second employee, while a third calls 911 with all the proper info.

After the call, the third employee rushes to the scene to divert play and away from the emergency. We do not need any golf fanatic hitting into this situation.

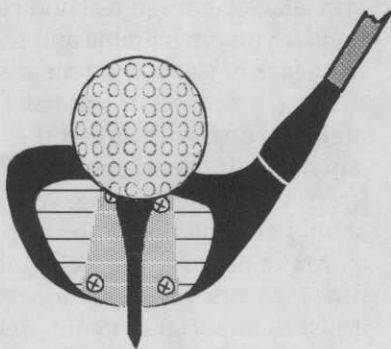
Now, after all this, the final cost is equal to the price of a couple of sets of walkie-talkies. A small cost to consider because you probably need them anyway.

Now, envision this scenario: It is March, and you are checking the course when once again you hear that awful screech, "Help!" You immediately arrive to the same lifeless golfer, but this time you can do something. You immediately start CPR and fifteen minutes later, the ambulance squad takes away a living breathing golfer who will someday hole-out the chip shot he so ably hit prior to his trauma. Now that feels good!

Trust me, it happened! All because there was *Help on the way.*

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