



Maintaining Sand Depth

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Repairing bunker washouts is one of the most labor-intensive practices on a golf course. Once water is drained from a washed out bunker, the sand has to be screened to remove any contaminants before it can be properly redistributed throughout the bunker. Repairing washed out bunkers can take from several hours to several days depending on the design, age and number of bunkers affected. Unfortunately, repairing washouts has been a common occurrence this year for many golf courses in the Central Region due to numerous heavy rain events.



The bunkers that have fared best typically have the following things in common:

- Minimal runoff from the surrounding area into the bunker
- Flatter bottoms versus steep, flashed faces
- Clean, well-draining sand
- Effective subsurface drainage
- Newer construction method utilizing a durable liner

For bunkers to properly and consistently perform, sand depths must be regularly checked. Although checking sand depth is intuitive for bunkers prone to

washouts, even well-performing bunkers benefit from this practice. Gradual changes in sand depth can be difficult to see; therefore, bunkers should be repeatedly sampled to maintain proper sand depth. The blade of a shovel or another type of probe often is used to determine sand depth. Another unique approach is to use several sections of drain pipe as a guide for measuring sand depth. Temporarily placing precut pieces of 4-inch corrugated drain pipe in



Using precut sections of 4-inch corrugated drain pipe as guides can be helpful in maintaining proper sand depth in bunkers.

representative areas of a bunker can help staff visualize where sand needs to be rearranged, improving efficiency and bunker uniformity.

If you can't remember the last time you checked the sand depth in your bunkers, it's probably time to do so.

For more information please review the USGA *Green Section Record* Digital Collection [Managing Bunkers](#).

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