



Floodwater Forays—Dealing With Silty Solutions

By Bob Vavrek, regional director, Central Region | August 4, 2017



Floodwater recedes, but a layer of silt remains. Wait until the surface dries before attempting to remove thick silt deposits from fairways and roughs.

The cumulative effect of multiple heavy rainfall events that recently occurred in the Central Region caused severe flooding that affected many golf facilities during July. Courses in the Chicago area, southeastern Wisconsin and northwestern Ohio were especially hard hit.

Those who have little experience with flood damage can be overwhelmed by the sight of fairways and roughs that are buried in silt when floodwaters finally recede. A natural reaction is to clean the turf as soon as possible using hoses, quick couplers and the irrigation system. Assuming the irrigation system is operational, washing a small amount of silt from a putting green or tee has value because these features are relatively small and are usually elevated. On the other hand, attempting to wash or push a thick layer of wet, soft silt around acres and acres of fairly flat fairways and roughs is akin to dousing a fire with gasoline.

It's not easy to wait for silt deposits to dry before attempting to clean the turf, but running equipment over soft soils and slick mud is futile and can easily cause additional damage. There is no sense in making a bad situation even worse.

Once silt dries, the depth of the layer will determine the best option for removal. A simple drag harrow or a length of chain-link fence may be all that is needed to break up and disperse a thin layer of silt from roughs. On the other hand, thick and dense silt deposits on fairways may require slicers, spikers or an aerator to break through before the silt can be brushed or blown away. Regardless of how thick or thin a silt layer is, removing silt when it is dry will produce a dense cloud of dust, so appropriately protect the staff with proper respiratory gear.

The article, "[The Flood of 1997](#)," describes in more detail the process of cleaning turf after a flood. The article may be 20 years old, but sound advice is timeless.

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