

# Are you wearing the **RIGHT GEAR** this summer?

**H**ow do you buy protective clothing for yourself and your staff? Do you consider the job to be done and then seek out the specification that best protects those vulnerable parts of the body from the hazards identified as part of the risk assessment? If your answer is yes then you are one of the very few who have got it right!

In most cases protective equipment is bought on price (often the lowest!); this results in either a failure to protect, or a failure in performance, that is, it didn't do the job. In accident investigations involving injuries to the worker inadequate, or unsuitable, protective equipment is often found to be a contributory cause to the injury.

In our work conducting health and safety audits for clients we frequently find respirators hanging in sheds covered in dust, personal ear protection dirty, torn and left on benches, or worse! Face shields so scratched that they are almost opaque and chainsaw clothing torn, dirty, damp and left hanging on a convenient nail! This type of protective equipment requires special care otherwise it will not do the job, and even worse, it may even spread infection especially to ears and hands.

Manufacturers and suppliers of protective equipment have available detailed test information, and data sheets that provide sufficient information to enable the right choice to be made. If there is any doubt as to what would be the most suitable type for a given situation, there are technical staff available to give advice.

When reviewing your existing protective equipment there are several important points to keep in mind:

- The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 place duties on the employer: (Regulation 4) "Every employer shall ensure that suitable personal protective equipment is provided to his employees who may be exposed to a risk to their health or safety while at work"... "it is capable of fitting the wearer correctly, if necessary after adjustments within the range for which it is designed". Where you employ staff who are very small, or in the

## Safety is priority number one

By Arne van Amerongen  
April 29, 1996 was a bad day for me in my career in the golf industry.

I had made a report on safety regulations for the golf course I was working on at the beginning of January. One particular part of these regulations was safety clothing. Costs are becoming a more important factor with the increased competition, especially on new courses which are owned by the members. In this case we are talking about only £30 for safety shoes which had to be saved, though on the other hand money is wasted on other things. For example, £150,000 was spent on pathways which only a few members and green fee players will use.

I will make my point now. Saving £30 caused a terrible accident. On April 29 I was inspecting the 4th hole on the course, when one of the foreign labourers came to me and said in broken German, "Accident happened, please come". I drove to the chipping green area and there I saw the green staff helping a young wounded employee. When I got nearer to the 19-year old boy, I saw that his left foot was bleeding. And as far as I could see he was missing two toes. He had previously been fly mowing on a slope, slipped and his left foot had come under the flymo.

This young man was wearing trainers and no safety boots. He was working for £3 an hour. After I called the emergency number, a helicopter arrived within five minutes. He was transported to a hospital specialising in microsurgery.

Half an hour later I found his two toes, put them in a plastic bag and drove straight to the hospital. Unfortunately it is, not possible to sew toes back on.

The point of this story is, that if the job requires it, everybody must work with safety clothes, from head to toe and money does not play a role at that moment. The boy is slowly walking again, but it is still very painful for him. He will probably work again – two to three months time after the accident. It could also have been worse.

For myself, as a consultant, after having written reports of what staff should wear, this accident has left a deep mark. From now on, when I write a report on safety and this is ignored, I will drop out as a consultant. I will not work for such clubs which only think in terms of money and not of human safety.

I hope that other consultants, Course Managers and anybody involved in work at golf courses will open their eyes and will, if necessary, lay down work if safety regulations are ignored.

case of greenkeepers, very large!, it may be necessary to order specially made equipment.

- The Regulations now set quality standards for almost all protective equipment, your equipment should have the BSI kite mark, or the CE mark, or both. If you find that existing equipment does not have the correct quality mark, then they may not be suitable.
- Before making a final decision on equipment for a job where you are not sure what would be suit-

not only for hygiene reasons but it will also have a significant effect on the life of the equipment.

**Jon Allbutt**

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Michael Richmond offers an extensive range of protective clothing specially developed to meet the new European CE standards. These include protective gloves, jackets, trousers and a wide range of new boots.

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### CHANGING ATTITUDES FOR THE BETTER

Among the advances taking place on the golf course is the attitude to greenstaff clothing. This has been brought about by a number of factors including the need to ensure: 1. Safe working practices, 2. Protection from the elements, 3. An eye to security where staff can be identified from casual intruders on the course and 4. An extension of the dress code applied to players to the club's own staff, developing the professional image of the club.

As a result Course Care, which is already supplying a full range of consumables to the greenkeeper and Course Manager has undertaken a study and introduced the Course Wear range. Course Wear offers a wide range of clothing to meet all of the above needs. This ranges from Chain Saw trousers for foul weather trousers for machine work. It includes shirts and jackets with embroidered logos to identify the club and the wearer. Course Wear supplies fully water-

able and/or adequate, seek advice. It may be better to buy one or two items and issue them to staff to use. If you do this you must monitor the use before making a decision.

- Where staff are issued with new equipment, they will need training that deals with correct use and maintenance. (Regulation 9)

- In addition to purchasing the equipment you must provide the correct facilities for cleaning and storage. This is very important