

# As Greenkeepers what do you have a right to expect?

by **Tony Rees MIOSH, Health & Safety Consultant & Senior Instructor with ATB-Landbase Training Services**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places duties on the Employer (Golf Club) not only covering the safety of employees but also on the general duty to ensure the safety of all other persons who may use the services or facilities.

The duties under the Act are broken down to show in a series of monthly articles:

- Employers Duty to Staff
- Employers Duty to Others
- Duties of Designers, Suppliers, Manufacturers of both Articles and Substances, Employees Duties.

This Act is supported by a series of Regulations which are also Statutory, that clarify specific responsibilities. In addition there are specific requirements both Statutory and Guidance covering the use of pesticides, chainsaws, abrasive wheels etc. These will be covered in future articles.

## Employers Duty to Staff

The effect of Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act is to make criminally enforceable the common law duty to take reasonable care for the safety of all employees.

Section 2(1) 'It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the Health, Safety and Welfare of all his Employees'

Section 2(2) In particular this duty extends to providing and maintaining:

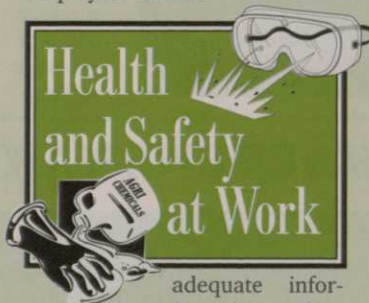
- safe plant and systems of work
- safe use, storage, handling and transport of articles and substances
- provision of information, instruction, training and supervision
- safe means of access and egress, with a safe place of work
- safe working environment

As can be seen from the above section the five points shown actually cover all aspects of the employers business, from the provision of safe equipment/machinery to use, the provision of safe operating procedures for their use to, the provision of information, instruction and

supervision to ensure that the equipment/task is carried out safely.

It requires the employer to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that all the equipment to be used eg tractor, mower, strimmer, chainsaw and any other equipment, is safe for the operator to use. It must be adequately guarded, maintained and in good a good condition to achieve this. There must also be available safe systems of work which will give the operators information and instruction on how to use the equipment safely covering the variations of use for example working on slopes or working alone.

We need to ensure that all articles and substances are handled, stored and transported safely at all times, and ensure that all employees receive



adequate information, instruction, training and supervision covering the work they will be doing. This relates to information regarding any specific hazard that may be encountered, and any specific equipment that may be used. Any specific training that is given should be to the required standard to enhance the competency of the individuals being trained. You may be required to produce evidence of this.

The use of the words "so far as is reasonable practicable" sets the standard for the employers duties. They are qualified rather than absolute duties. In practice it is for each employer to determine what are reasonably practicable precautions for the risks their employees may be exposed to at work by carrying out a risk assessment, and in most cases documenting this training in risk assessment fundamental to the implementation of safe practice.

A definition of "reasonably practicable" given by Case Law

shows that "reasonably practicable" is balancing the risks against the costs (in time, effort and money) in overcoming those risks. The greater the risks the more will be expected to be done by the courts.

Further guidance on what would be deemed as reasonably practicable precautions in the place of work can be found in Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance Notes and Codes of Practice from industry groups, and through training. In most instances Common Good Practice will be taken to be reasonably practicable.

## Section 2(3) Safety Policy

An employer with FIVE or more employees must produce a written statement of their general health and safety policy which should include:

A General Statement of their intentions with regard to Health and Safety. This statement should show what the organisation is going to do with regard to Health and Safety and must be signed and dated by the most senior person in the organisation.

The Organisation which will state the specific duties placed on staff to ensure that the statement is implemented.

The Arrangements for carrying out the policy. Procedures to allow the organisations intentions to be achieved. This would cover specifics – what will be done to ensure that employees and others are kept as safe as is reasonably practicable. The arrangements would give specific guidelines to cover things like Machinery Safety, Manual Handling, Electricity, Noise, COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health), Accident Reporting/Recording, First Aid, Fire and all other topics that could effect Health and Safety.

■ Next month we will look at the Employer's duty to others eg club members and the public together with the duty of Designers, Manufacturers and suppliers of articles and substances.

■ Further information on training courses and consultancy ATB-Landbase Training Services (Jean John on 01282 617466 or Tony Rees on 01686 622799).

## ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

### Profile

Usually the spotlight falls on the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper at a Club. Now it is the turn of those whose work often goes unheralded to star...



Name: **Scott Corrigan**  
Age: **23**  
Club: **Greenburn GC, West Lothian**  
Position: **First Assistant**

#### 1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?

Seven years

#### 2. What education are you currently undertaking?

HNC in Golf Course Management

#### 3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?

Redesigning features of the golf course – bunkers, mounds etc

#### 4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?

Hollow coring

#### 5. What job other than greenkeeping might you have ended up doing?

Electrician or a joiner

#### 6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

My mum, Ann, and my dad, John.

#### 7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?

Double the standard rate of a First Assistant's wages and educate the golfer about the work involved with maintaining a golf course.

#### 8. What are your hobbies?

Golf, football and cycling

#### 9. What do you get out of BIGGA?

Information on education, good articles that are relevant, security through the insurance provided and a chance to play golf at other courses.

#### 10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?

I hope to become a Head Greenkeeper or maybe a Course Manager.