

# THE RIGHT CHEMISTRY?

Chemicals play a big role in a Greenkeepers work, not only their use out on the course, but also their storage in and around the workshop or maintenance building. There is a set of Regulations that covers the use of chemicals in the workplace, which we should already be aware of, and they are the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994 or COSHH as they have become known. These regulations have been covered in depth in previous editions, however, essentially they require employers to carry out an assessment of the risk that the substances or chemicals being used pose.

The risk assessment not only has to be done on the chemical itself but also it has to include information regarding how and when it will be used, who will use it and then put controls into place to reduce the risk. Control methods range from eliminating the substance and using another less hazardous one, isolating it or using it in a spray booth/fume cupboard, reducing exposure to it either by reducing the amount of fumes you are in contact with or using a ventilation/extraction system ie a welding extraction system. Personal Protective Equipment must always be used as a last resort if other methods of control cannot be

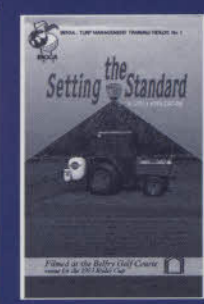
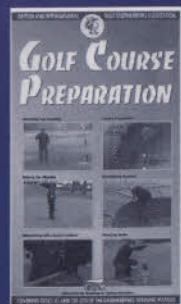
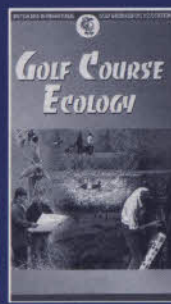
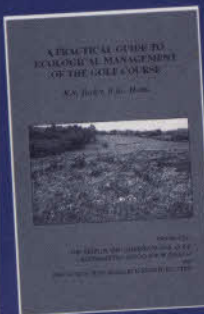
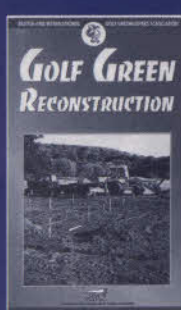
used, but common pieces of PPE that Greenkeepers will be in contact with include safety boots, chemical resistant gloves, aprons and chemical resistant suits, safety glasses or goggles and dust masks or respirators. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is also covered by its own set of Regulations, these being introduced in 1992. The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (1992) again require the employer to make a formal assessment of the PPE needed for their employees and to provide ergonomically suitable equipment in relation to the foreseeable risks of work. For example, whilst cutting the greens the risk assessment would indicate the need to wear steel toe capped safety boots and not open toed sandals. Employers are also given duties to ensure that they provide PPE that is compatible with each other ie the hard hat and the ear defenders that you use whilst carrying out strimming operation have to fit together and offer the optimum level of safety ie the ear defenders are fitted to the side of the hard hat and they fit snugly over the ears to ensure that the noise levels reaching the ears is reduced. Other duties on employers include maintaining PPE in efficient

working order and a good state of repair, providing storage facilities for PPE not in use ie a storage locker in the Workshop and not just hanging the goggles, etc over the edge of machines. Employees also have to be provided with information, instruction and training as required to enable them to use the PPE provided in a safe manner. Employees are also given duties under the regulations, these being the need to use PPE in accordance with training and instructions and to report any defects or loss to their employers, these requirements enhance the employees duties contained in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Three other pieces of legislation specifically covering the workplace are also relevant in this Maintenance building / Workshop scenario and they are the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 and the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996. The Workplace regulations require employers to maintain it in an efficient state, keep it clean, segregate pedestrians and vehicles wherever possible, etc. The Safety Signs regulations also tie in here and are required where the risk cannot

be adequately controlled by other means. There are four basic colours for safety signs, each one having a different meaning. Prohibitory signs are usually round with red edging, warning signs are triangular with black and yellow, Mandatory signs are usually round and blue and white in colour, and finally Emergency Escape or First Aid signs are predominantly rectangular or square and are green and white. The last set of regulations that would effect the Maintenance buildings or Workshops would be the most recently introduced Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997. These require all non-fire certificated buildings to be assessed (same principle as the risk assessment that was highlighted before) for fire risk and controls to be put in place to reduce the risk down to its lowest level. This would necessitate the provision of fire fighting equipment, measures to detect and warn of fires and ensure safe evacuation of persons via emergency routes and exits.

Further information on training courses and consultancy contact Lantra National Organisation Ltd (Jean John on 01282 831973 or Tony Rees on 01686 622799)

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