

Taking precautions



Over the next few months we are going to look at the general and more specific health and safety requirements for Maintenance Buildings. The buildings that on most golf courses are used for the storage and maintenance of equipment. We have so far looked at individual pieces of health and safety legislation. We will now look at how this legislation affects a working area of the golf course. Let's first look at the legislation involved:

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; Specific sections of the Factories Act; The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations; The Manual Handling Regulations; Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations; Supply of Machinery Regulations; Electricity at Work Regulations; Noise at Work Regulations; Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH); Personal Protective Equipment Regulations; Fire Safety (Workplace) Regulations Safety Signs and Signals Regulations

The first one to look at is the Health and Safety at Work Act. As you will recall this places a general duty on the employer and employee. The employer must ensure that the equipment provided is safe to use. To

do this it should be ensured that all guards are in place and all equipment works correctly and safely, by providing adequate maintenance and testing of equipment, together with sufficient information and training to allow the equipment to be used safely. Records should be kept covering all maintenance and training. The use of the equipment should also be supervised to reduce the possibility of misuse or unsafe use. We should also have written systems and procedures for carrying out specifically hazardous jobs, for example sharpening of mower blades, lifting equipment using blocks and tackle.

Where we mentioned earlier the Factories Act, the section that still applies requires the periodic testing and inspection of chains and lifting equipment. This must be certificated and records kept. The employee also has a duty to use the equipment safely and to follow laid down procedures and not to put themselves or others in danger. Following on from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992. These regulations place a duty on the employer to carry out an assessment of all risks to health that are present in the Workplace. This was looked at in detail recently in the previous issues, however in essence it requires information to be gathered on the hazards that are in the Workplace and address what risk they pose to persons exposed to them. This process of assessing risks then allows controls to be introduced, systems or procedures adopted or other means to reduce the risks and allow work to be carried out in a safer manner. Risk assessments would be needed for tasks such as mowing, grass/rough cutting, use of portable tools, use of grinding wheels and all other tasks that you would be required to under-

take in a maintenance building or workshop. Carrying on the same theme for the need to assess risk we then come to the Manual Handling Operations Regulation 1992. As with the previous Regulations these apply to all workplaces and place a duty on employers to, firstly, avoid Manual Handling totally if at all possible. Secondly, if this cannot be achieved then the employer is to carry out an assessment of the risk that each manual handling task poses. When carrying out a Manual Handling assessment, there are four main areas that need to be investigated, these being firstly, the task ie what is actually needed to be done? Secondly, you have to take into account the individual who will be required to perform this task. This will entail looking at whether or not the person has a history of back problems, for example, or are physically capable of lifting, pushing or pulling the items or equipment involved. The third factor to be considered is the actual load itself ie What is it? What shape is it? Is it rigid or flexible? Is it stable? Has it got handles? etc. Finally, you must take into consideration where this task or operation is to take place ie is it to be carried out in an open shed in the middle of winter when it will be cold/wet and the operator will be wearing extra clothing which may impede movements etc. The risks of injury need to be assessed, recorded and action taken to reduce them to the lowest level by providing such items as lifting tackle, hoists, hydraulic tables or workbenches, trailers, etc, or do you provide training in safe and correct lifting techniques for all staff involved.

Next month we will look at the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations.

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