

HEALTH & SAFETY



HAZTEK INTERNATIONAL

So whose responsibility is it?

Jerrard Winter explains where the responsibilities lie when it comes to Health and Safety on your golf course

Modern golf club management is rapidly changing and the present day Secretary/Manager has a much wider role than previously. He now is the organiser and planner, involved in finances, involved in building and maintenance etc as well as now having to ensure the golf club is fully complying with the current health and safety legislation, equal opportunities and racial equality as well as providing for the disabled and under 18's.

In years gone by the Secretary/Manager was not as aware or as well versed in the Health and Safety requirements and quite often did the minimum to stay within the law. In 1992 the law changed and tightened up producing a new set of regulations called The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 that basically made risk assessment mandatory and introduced several other key regulations applicable to golf clubs.

Not bored yet? Well things get better.

The first job the Secretary/Manager has to do is to work out the clear responsibilities as laid down in the club Health and Safety Policy and endorsed by the club committee or board of directors/management. From this point it is then absolutely essential that all other operating areas of the club fully understand both the legislation and regulations in place and what it means to their day to day jobs. I am concentrating here on the greenstaff but all others shouldn't feel unwanted.

For the Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager it means complying with almost all regulations applicable to golf clubs without exception; I don't intend to list the regulations but have produced a hit list of the main requirements;

GENERAL HAZARDS RISK ASSESSMENTS

All maintenance facility and machinery activity must be supported by a current suitable and sufficient risk assessment. In short, this really means the greenstaff must fully understand all of the hazards associated with their work and these be fully documented for inspection at any time. It is important that these are kept up to date if any changes occur in greenshed activities. The responsibility primarily lies with the club secretary/manager to ensure these are in place but the Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager should assist in this process.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

All maintenance facility locations must have undergone a formal Fire Risk Assessment, which should identify each and every fire source and ensure all possible measures have been put in place to remove the fire hazard or minimise its consequences. The Fire Risk Assessment may be inspected by insurance companies or the Fire Officer if visiting the club so is mandatory. The responsibility for ensuring this is completed lies with the club secretary/manager.

MANUAL HANDLING ASSESSMENTS

Any handling of objects which could lead to back injury or injury to body parts require a Manual Handling Assessment. This assessment

basically looks at the nature of the activity in terms of weight, height, difficulty and assesses whether the lift could be achieved with less or no risk to individuals. The responsibility for ensuring this is in place lies with the Club Secretary/manager but the greenstaff should be aware and encourage this assessment to be completed for their own health and welfare. Training in manual handling is readily available.

COSHH ASSESSMENT

most golf clubs are now well aware of the COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations 1985 and operate within the law. For those unfamiliar these regulations are in place to protect persons or the public from being harmed by hazardous chemicals. The COSHH assessment should identify all of the chemicals used by the greenstaff and ensure a formal record is kept of each chemical and the harm it can cause if spilled or incorrectly mixed. The assessment should then recommend the safeguards for use (ie PPE, Chemical suits, neutralisers) and ensure these are always available. Chemicals should be stored safely in locked containers such as Chem-Stores and a sign out/sign in procedure used. The responsibility for ensuring a COSHH Assessment is in place primarily lies with the greenstaff.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

These regulations are applicable mainly to greenstaff and are very much about reducing occupational hazards. During a normal day certain greenstaff will be exposed to noise, errant golf balls, flying stones from cutting, dust etc as well as handling chemicals, flammables and diesel. To ensure all staff return home as good as they arrived it is recommended that the club again formally assesses the need for PPE in certain tasks. The responsibility lies with the Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager. There are some other applicable requirements to ensure the health and hygiene of employees is protected as well as the use of computers and transporting flammables.

Golf club management should now jointly address Health and Safety issues as a total club as the requirements do not stop at the greenstaff but apply to the catering and professional in many respects. The knowledge within the club in all departments should be shared to make the club a safer place in all respects and something to be proud of.

It's all our responsibilities.

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