

## Health & Safety Legislation - Has it gone too far?

In my new role working in this area I come across a lot of negative comment and much of it is because there is a belief that civil servants sit down and deliberately try to make our life as difficult as possible.

It is true that the people involved may not be experts on golf clubs and related industries but they do consult to get as much information as possible - it would not be in their best interests to get it seriously wrong!

One area of misunderstanding of any legislation is to take it to the extreme, or too literally, to make sure you're covered no matter what happens.

I will use the hard hat scenario as an example.



### Hard Hats

Legislation dictates that hard hats must be worn in situations where a risk of injury may occur - usually in our case, golf balls flying around when we are working on the golf course.

It frequently happens that 'an official' taking the safe option, with the best intentions I hasten to add, instructs the course staff to wear hard hats at all times when on the golf course.

This alienates the staff because of...

1. The discomfort involved, particularly in the summer months.
2. Little understanding of the work which is carried out.

The result is that the staff does not carry out the instructions and the course becomes a more risky place to work - this situation of course is the exact opposite of what was intended - to make workplaces safer.

The correct procedure is...

1. Risk assess the golf course - this must be carried out by the expert (the department head, i.e. Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper) with assistance if required.

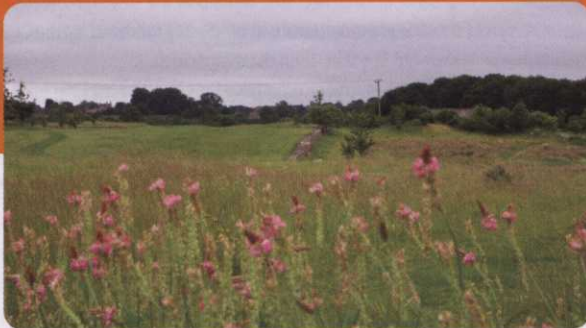
2. Identify those areas where there is risk of danger from golf balls - you will find in normal circumstances that one or maybe two areas relate to this.
3. Inform staff of the dangers involved and instruct that hard hats must be worn in these areas when there is a risk.

From experience and analysis of the problem you will find that highlighting this and discussing further with staff the changing of the work routine, i.e. doing the work when there is no golf being played may eliminate the danger, and therefore there would be no need to wear hard hats at all.

However, you can only arrive at this practical solution if there is open discussion of the problems and possible dangers involved.

To find out more please look at [www.safegolfplan.com](http://www.safegolfplan.com) or call Duncan McGilray and the Haztek team on: 0208 905 7552 email: [info@haztekinternational.com](mailto:info@haztekinternational.com).

# Tip of the Month



The rough, out of immediate play or open grassland areas on your golf course still need to be maintained. It is necessary to cut this rough at least two times a year.

Make the first cut in March. This allows wildflowers to bloom and set seed through early summer before being overtaken by faster growing weed grasses. A good height of cut should be between 50-75mm (2-3 inc).

The second cut should be made in August after flowers have set seeds, thus allowing the spread of wild flower seeds for next summer and suppressing the vigour of weed species.

This management program has enormous ecological benefits creating sward

## WHEN THE GOING GETS ROUGH

diversity, increasing natural flora and fauna to the area, therefore allowing a wild life corridor for small animals to move from one food source to another. An added benefit of this is that the golf course becomes more attractive, creating a backdrop to many holes without restricting play.

Over seeding the area with a wild flower seed mix might be necessary to create flower rich grassland. The best time to over seed is in autumn, as the soil is moist and still warm.

There are many flower seed sales companies on the market, negotiate with a number of them to find the right seed mix at the right price for your golf course.

**Ivan Killip**

Deputy Head Greenkeeper,  
Gatton Manor Golf Club



Do you have a tip that has helped you in your day-to-day work on the golf course? If so, why not share it with other greenkeepers. Please send any tips you feel would benefit your fellow readers to us either by post at BIGGA HOUSE or by email to [gareth@bigga.co.uk](mailto:gareth@bigga.co.uk).