

# Be Prepared!

At the first hint of spring, golfers are ready to play but are you and your sprayer prepared for that first outing? Richard Fry finds out...

Due to the ever-increasing cost of pesticides, the need to ensure Health & Safety guidelines are met while at the same achieving maximum spraying effectiveness, it clearly makes sense to ensure that a sprayer is operating safely and efficiently.



Pre-season checking of filter for cleanliness and damage

The application of sprays within a golf course environment carries a high level of responsibility. There is the safety of players and visitors to consider, the local environment; including valued plants, wildlife, water bodies and, not least, the spray operator.

If a sprayer does not perform at its maximum efficiency throughout the spraying season there could be costly downtime during critical periods such as sudden fungal attack. A few hours of waiting for a problem to be fixed can make the difference between immediate control or a widespread infection.

Poor sprayer pre-season maintenance or inattention to faults can mean unnecessary chemical waste and the potential for either turf damage or poor control that would lead to an unnecessary and costly return visit.

If a club has not had its sprayer tested under The National Sprayer Testing Scheme it is still not too late and there are approved testing stations throughout the country. This scheme, developed by the A.E.A, is part of the Voluntary Initiative. If there is not time to book in to one of these testing stations, a downloadable check sheet is available direct from the following website [www.aea.uk.com/sprayer](http://www.aea.uk.com/sprayer).

Before any spraying is undertaken ensure that a thorough check of the machine and equipment is carried out and make a quick risk assessment: Is the sprayer secure, is the PTO shaft guarded. Other checks should assess nozzle wear and spray output (only check with clean water), the condition of the pipes and hoses, filters and pressure gauges.

It is vital also to check beforehand with your chemical supplier the approval status of the products being used as many are being withdrawn from the list. As always it is essential to consult the product label as changes may have been introduced since the last time it was read and ensure that the minimum recommended protective clothing is worn relevant to the product being applied. This is a vital requirement for managers as it is A Duty of Care responsibility to ensure that employees in their charge are protected at all times.



When spraying close to water ensure that LERAP guidelines have been followed and the correct nozzles have been fitted

Always ensure that the spraying practices adopted are in line with the Club Policy and Risk Assessment. If required by the product label place information signs that are easily visible to advise those on the course that spraying is taking place. By taking such actions, management and members concerns and misunderstandings will be reduced or even eliminated.

Spraying should only commence when climatic conditions are favourable and particular care should be taken when spraying in the vicinity of lakes and drainage ditches. Local Environmental Risk Assessment Practices for Pesticides (LERAP) should be adhered to in such situations and low drift nozzles fitted to machines, at least one sprayer manufacturer Gambetti fit these nozzles as standard to all their amenity sprayers.

Finally, as an added insurance for operators to be able to see at a glance that the sprays being applied are placed with accuracy and uniformity, the simple and inexpensive addition of a spray pattern indicator should be added to the tank solution.

Greenlink International, in association with BIGGA is sponsoring an initiative to identify the Master Sprayer of the year. This initiative supports the use of Blazon spray pattern indicator as a valuable operator spraying aid.

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