



# FENCING AND NETTING – HEALTH AND SAFETY

*By Bill Lawlor*

**The erection and maintenance of fencing and netting within golf clubs are routine activities at many Courses. As the activities are seen as routine the associated health and safety issues are not always recognised.**

When engaged in these activities risk assessments should be carried out before, during and after the work to address the health and safety issues involved for those who are to construct and maintain them and continued inspection and maintenance to protect both Club users and third parties.

## FENCING

The first deciding factor is whether the work is to be carried out by in-house staff or out-sourced to a contractor.

Where work is out-sourced then a contractor risk assessment is required. This would require the contractor to provide:

- Proof of competence to carry out the work
- A risk assessment for the work. As a minimum the points outlined in the in-house risk assessment should be addressed
- A method statement how the work will be carried out
- The contractor's health and safety policies and procedures
- The arrangements for First Aid
- Any specific hazards in the area of the Club that may affect the health and safety of the contractor's employees
- How the contractor will protect the safety of Club users when carrying out the work
- Proof of liability insurance that will cover any potential damages or losses by the Club

Where the work is carried out in-house, the risk assessment should include:

- What manual handling is involved?
- Are the components of the fencing carried to site and how are they lifted into position?
- Is the area where fence posts are to be installed guaranteed to be free of underground services of water, gas and electricity cables?
- Where working near overhead power lines is a 40m gap maintained? – Otherwise consult the local electricity company before work commences

If powered equipment is used e.g. post hole drillers, nail guns etc is:

- The operator competent to use the equipment, could you demonstrate this if required
- The operator aware of the hazards associated with the equipment
- The equipment maintained and serviced as per the manufacturer's instructions
- Personal protective equipment required, head, hand, foot and eye protection and issued
- Precaution taken to ensure third parties cannot be injured while it is in operation
- The ground condition and contour suitable for the weight of the equipment involved
- The hazard and risks been discussed with the operators e.g. fumes from combustion engines, torque being transferred to the operator in hand held powered augers, noise, etc
- The hazard of using petrol powered equipment and

the precautions to be taken when refilling the equipment recognised

- Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) assessments will be required where posts are cemented in place or if wood preservatives are used
- Where the site is remote from the Clubhouse or maintenance facility, first aid provision should be held at the site and operators trained in its use
- Where livestock are in the adjacent area, consult with the local farmer before work commences to ensure that livestock do not wander or present a safety risk to the operators and other Club users
- Are there suitable stable stiles or gates to allow Club users and others to cross over the fence where required
- Barbed wire adjacent to public areas should not be used if it is less than two metres from a public footpath and less than two metres high
- Provision of an inspection regime to ensure that fencing remains whole and does not constitute a hazard to club users, employees and other third parties



## NETTING

Netting can be used in different areas within the golf club:

- In the practice area/range
- Where a road abounds areas of the club and miss-hit balls may strike vehicles on the road
- To protect persons, houses and public areas from errant golf balls

Inspection of nets that are used to protect persons, houses etc should ensure that:

- The mesh size and strength of the net will not allow golf balls to pass through it
- No holes in the netting have occurred due to impacts that would allow balls to pass through it
- Posts are frequently inspected to ensure the stability of any structure, especially after high winds
- The nets do not have a negative environmental impact on local wildlife, e.g. in some cases nets may require to be made more visible to prevent birds flying into them

As with fencing the erection and maintenance of netting should be subject to a risk assessment. Some hazards and risks are common to all types of netting, these include:

- An assessment of the manual handling required e.g. weight and frequency of lifts, carry distances, single or team lifts etc and whether a manual handling risk assessment is required. This



would apply to both the construction of nets and where practice nets are moved around

- A regular assessment of the rigidity and stability of any structure should be determined especially where structures are designed to be portable. Lightweight structures should be anchored to the ground where possible or be weighted down to prevent movement
- Is work at height required in both constructing the netting and in any maintenance e.g. checking joints and connections, clearing off litter, dead birds, leaves. Those required to work at height should be suitably trained to do so
- That stanchions are covered with sufficiently slack netting to prevent ricochets
- In multi practice nets net screening between the bays will be required to prevent injury to adjacent users. Exit and entry will also have to be configured to ensure that those using the facility are not struck by either clubs or balls from other players
- Where golf balls have to be retrieved from multi-use practice nets by either staff or Club users, a procedure should be in place to ensure that this can be done safely e.g. closing all or part of the facility for use to allow this to take place

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