

Neil Gibbons looks at the COSHH Assessments and how best to go about carrying them out

COSHH ASSESSMENTS



Introduction

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 (COSHH for short) have been in existence for a long time but there is still, it seems to be, a serious lack of appreciation of what a so called COSHH assessment really means. This article is intended to give you the information to be able to carry out assessments correctly.

Not long ago I went into a company and, when I asked to see their COSHH Assessments, was proudly given a large file. However, when I examined it, it simply contained all the Safety Data Sheets. These are not assessments.

Making an Inventory

So how do you start to comply with COSHH? Well, you cannot do anything until you know what substances you have.

Therefore, an inventory of all the substances within the organisation is key. It is best to consider individual areas to ensure you are thorough i.e. Greenkeepers, Clubhouse (including bar), Pro-shop. You may be surprised to find how long the list is, but do try to make sure it is complete.

All substances in use by your organisation should have been supplied with a Material Safety Data Sheet. If you do not have one for each of the substances you use, contact your supplier (found by looking at the packaging), who is obliged to supply one.

Doing the Assessment

As I have said above merely having a list of substances you use and a file containing all the Material Safety Data Sheets does not constitute an assessment. The stages involved in an assessment are:

- Establish if the substances you use are hazardous and what is the type of hazard. The CHIP (Chemical Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations define classifications for hazardous substances. The main classifications are harmful, irritant, corrosive, toxic, flammable, oxidising. The container for the substance will be labelled accordingly.

- Establish the approximate usage of the substance (e.g. kg or litres per week) along with the frequency (how often) and duration of use (minutes or hours?).

- Record how contact with the substance occurs and brief details on how and where it is used. For example with small quantities of paint it could be 'used externally for general painting' or when mixing chemicals for spraying 'mixed with water and then poured into spray unit tank. Process carried out on concrete area outside (or in well ventilated area).

- Record what control measures are used to avoid exposure to the substance. This could be an extraction system, the use of a pump to avoid contact, or most commonly the use of Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. safety spectacles or goggles, gloves, overalls, chemical suit, wellingtons).

It is only after recording all this information that an assessment can then be made, and I hope it is evident that you cannot make one without it, because the conclusion has to be the answer to the following question;

Is the exposure to this substance which is hazardous to health suitably controlled to avoid it being harmful to the employee (or anyone else likely to be exposed to it)?

If your assessment concludes that exposure is not likely to be harmful then that is as far as you need go. A record of this assessment needs to be kept along with a copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet.

Further Control Measures

If the assessment concludes that exposure is still potentially harmful you must consider additional control measures.

The COSHH Regulations, as with other risk assessment processes, lays down a hierarchy of control measures you must consider:

- Do you really need to use it or can it be replaced by something less hazardous?

- Can you reduce the usage of it by changing the process?

- Can exposure be reduced by introducing some form of mechanical exposure control or handling device (e.g. a pump)?

- Can ventilation be improved?

- Can you reduce the exposure by changing the process or how the substance is used (operating procedure)?

- Is additional or better Personal Protective Equipment required?

Monitoring

In my opinion one of the biggest problems in reaching a conclusion as to whether exposure is adequately controlled is that it is impossible to know the levels of the substance in the atmosphere without measuring it. Where exposure duration is short and infrequent it is unlikely exposure levels will be exceeded. However there is obviously a need to consider if monitoring is required. This needs to be carried out by a suitably qualified person and can involve monitoring of the workplace or personal monitoring.

It should also be noted that in certain cases involving the use of particularly hazardous substances (for example carcinogens) health surveillance of employees will be required

Conclusion

I hope I have demonstrated that there is far more to a COSHH Assessment than simply obtaining the Material Safety Data Sheet. However the main point is that you are conducting an assessment i.e. that you must reach a conclusion as to whether the control measures you have in place are suitable to control the risk of exposure.

For more information on COSHH or assistance with COSHH Assessments or indeed any Health and Safety problem please contact:

Safety Measures Ltd, Innovation House, Daleside Road, Nottingham, NG2 4 DH
Tel: 0115 911 0595 Fax: 0115 911 0590
e-mail: safetymeal@aol.com



This month, Tracey Maddison from BIGGA's Membership Services Department, would like to welcome over 100 new members to the Association, and bids you all a fond farewell as she is venturing to pastures new.

Bidding a fond farewell ...

This has to be the hardest Membership Update column I've ever had to write, because I know that as you are reading this issue I will be but a distant memory in the BIGGA staff room! After a very enjoyable four years with BIGGA, fate has stepped in and indicated it is time to move on to something new. I have been appointed the Membership and Training Manager for the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine, conveniently located in my home town of York, a short distance from my home. I commence employment with them on Monday 8th April.

I have many thank you's to say, so I hope that you will bear with me while I use this opportunity to say them. First, I would like to thank all the staff at BIGGA HQ, they are a great bunch of people to work with, I have made many friends I know I can count on after I leave. Not only are they great friends, but from a professional point of view I have learnt much from each of them, their skills, abilities, knowledge and enthusiasm for each of their

areas of expertise is to be admired. Your Association is in good hands.

I would also like to pass on my thanks to each of the Regional Administrators, Peter B, Doug, Peter L, Derek and Paula who work endlessly to administer each of the five regions. I have had the pleasure of accompanying each of them on regional and section seminars and conferences and experiencing their kind hospitality! Also, to each of the Section Secretaries, who, in their spare time administer each of their sections, which is important in the processing of membership recruitment and retention.

There have been many people throughout my four years at BIGGA who have given me valuable support and advice, they are all too numerous to mention by name but I would like to thank each of you. Finally, a big thank you to you, the members, because without you I wouldn't have had the opportunity, the fun and the valuable experience of working for BIGGA!

... and a warm welcome

Tracey's successor as Membership Services Officer is 25 year-old Rachael Palmer, who brings to the role extensive membership experience acquired at a prestigious club in another sporting arena altogether.

Brought up on the Isle of Wight, Rachael spent four years as Office Manager/Administrator for the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, at Cowes.

"I was involved in all aspects of administering the club for the 850 members," said Rachael, whose involvement during the famous Cowes Week will no doubt be good training for Harrogate!

"Because I have worked for a mem-



Rachael Palmer

bers' club hopefully I understand the issues that can arise from working with committees and I like to think that that experience will help me when it comes to dealing with BIGGA members who might be encountering similar situations," she explained.

There were three main reasons that persuaded Rachael and her husband, Stuart, to leave the Isle of Wight and move to Yorkshire - football, hills and beer!

They have a quite unfathomable love for Leeds United and moving to

Don't Drift Away ...

If your membership expired on 31 December 2001, 31 January 2002 or 28 February 2002 and you haven't yet renewed, don't drift away from your Association, renew your membership this month. Providing you are working as a greenkeeper, we will still have your details on our database and can renew your membership with a new expiry date, you can even pay by direct debit if you wish. Don't leave it any longer, if you need a renewal form or further information contact the Membership Services Team, on 01347 833800.

April's Membership Draw Winner



Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win a fantastic BIGGA Clock/calculator/calendar and alarm.

Our congratulations go to April's winner, Michael Ward, of Bawburgh Golf Club.

York enabled them to become season ticket holders and expand on the 10, mainly away games a season, they had managed previously - among them last season the Champions League semi final at Valencia.

They are also keen cyclists and can often be seen aboard their 1950s tandem which they restored themselves.

Finally they are both agreed that northern brews are far superior to their southern counterparts and a move north would make them much more accessible.

"We both love it in Yorkshire and are delighted that we made the move. I am looking forward to my work with BIGGA and meeting as many members as I can," she said.

Take a time-honoured look back through the pages of Greenkeeper International from a decade ago



APRIL 1992

This month we take a look at 'Around the Green' ten years ago

Prophetic?

The Devon and Cornwall Section notes reported that golf and an excellent lunch had been followed by Kerran Daly presenting a paper on 'Computers and Greenkeeping'. It was suggested that Kerran must have thought he was on the coach from Harrogate when water started to drip onto his overhead projector, but to his credit he waded on in fine style and brought home the point that greenkeepers do not need to be afraid of computers as those available are 'user friendly'. Kerran further suggested that all greenkeepers would be found in the work place in the near future ...

A Right Dressing Down

A scribe to one Section's notes advised that he was ending his report on a sour note. One thing that did not go unnoticed at the Section's seminar was the number of greenkeepers who arrived wearing jeans, sweat shirts, training shoes and, would you believe it, tracksuit bottoms! This surely cannot go on any longer. If golf club members are expected to dress correctly at their own club, surely we owe it to them (and to ourselves) to do likewise. It is pure luck that these individuals have not been refused entry into respectable clubs and it is surely only a matter of time before such a refusal will face the culprits. Worse still, as a section we may not be extended the courtesy of many clubs, simply because of the few without pride, who cannot dress themselves properly. If individuals cannot take responsibility for their dress at such events, then their head greenkeepers must take it on themselves, if only to safe guard our interests. So come on, all you head men; if you are sending staff to represent your club at any future section event - golfing or non-golfing - get them in order, or don't send them at all!

Farmers do not make good Greenkeepers ...

This Section's notes make interesting reading. One of the many fields with 18 flagsticks that have been described as 'golf courses' has as an active farmer owner. He has a good Head Greenkeeper (for now) but over-rides everything the head man suggests. The greenkeeper, fed up with all the arguing, has decided to toe the line and do just what he is told - e.g. scarify and top dress in early February when there is a hard frost in the ground, never close the course, and if it snows the green staff will be laid off without pay! Not surprisingly, this course is going downhill even faster than Eddie the Eagle, and serves to highlight the enormous potential for 'quality' courses when one considers the vast numbers who play these 'mickey mouse' set-ups, simply because there is nowhere else to go.

A BIGGA welcome...

Scottish Region

Jonathan Campbell, East
 Graeme Flett, East
 Fraser Gellan, North
 Edward Hay, East
 Robert Laing, North
 Kenneth MacKenzie, East
 Brian McCann, East
 Steven Ness, East
 Richard Ralph, North

Robyn Howard, N West
 Frederick Ingleby, Sheffield
 Stephen Lackey, N West
 Brett Matusiewicz, Northern
 Michael Moore, N West
 John Parsons, Sheffield
 John Taylor, Northern
 Philip Teare, N West
 Paul Thresh, Northern
 Andrew Tickle, N West
 John Watts, Northern

Northern Region

Gordon Butcher, Sheffield
 Craig Callwood, N Wales
 Shaun Chadwick, Sheffield
 Duncan Dooner, N West
 Keith Dunderdale, Sheffield
 Ian Dunnachie, Cleveland
 David Follows, Northern
 Thomas Fenwick, N East
 Gary Garner, N West
 Peter Griffith, N Wales
 Andrew Grundey, N Wales
 Peter Hacking, N West
 Neville Hayden, Northern

Midland Region

Daniel Adams, Midland
 Barry Brown, Mid Anglia
 Simon Caudwell, E of England
 Ben Emerson, BB&O
 Brian Hunt, Mid Anglia
 Luke Hunt, E of England
 Lee March, BB&O
 Steve Phillips, Midland
 James Plant, E of England
 Craig Riches, BB&O
 Matthew Townsend, BB&O
 Alex Wright, Mid Anglia
 Colin Yates, E Midland

South East Region

Mo Bah, London
 Michael Bassett, Essex
 Keith Buckingham, London
 Aaron Crittenden, Surrey
 Cyril Ellis, Surrey
 Cassian Freeman, Essex
 Keith Graham, London
 Andrew Hemmings, Surrey
 Matthew Lowe, Essex
 Malcolm McGeoch, Essex
 Marc Richards, Surrey
 Dominic Rodgers, E Anglia
 John Springham, Kent
 Martin Trower, Essex
 Lloyd Wright, Kent

S West & S Wales Region

Marc Batcup, S Wales
 Jonathan Beynon, S Wales
 Gareth Blake, S Coast
 Antony Cailles, S Coast
 Edward Cary, S West
 Frederick Hartles, S West
 Luke Haskell, S Coast
 Mathew Leeson-Magry, S West
 Tom Lowe, S Wales

Peter Marsh, S Coast
 John Phillips, Dev & C'Wall
 Stuart Ponfield, S West
 Ian Reed, S West
 David Rosselli, S West
 Mark Sherwood, S Coast
 Richard Unsworth, Dev & C'Wall

Northern Ireland

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 Michael Leonard
 Geoffrey Roulston

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 Michael Carlson, USA
 Erik Grippenberg, Sweden
 Tobias Hartmann, Germany
 Jay Nalls IV, USA
 Edward Walsh, USA

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 Richard Rainford, N West
 Paul Rooney, N West
 John Sullivan, S Wales

Golden/Silver Key Members

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 Justin Smith, Mid Anglia
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THE

David Winterton MG reports back on the second Bernhard Scholarship Trip, this time to the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando

FLORIDA

Photography:
Tony Dunstan

EXPERIENCE

Ten very lucky guys met one rain filled day at Gatwick, bound for Florida. Like Knights of the Round Table we took our places on the plane. Landing nine hours later I realised what a diverse group of greenkeepers we were, coming from areas so completely different from each other. The world's greatest playground heaven welcomed us with its riches of con-

crete, tarmac and hotels, surrounded by amazing golf courses with wetlands galore.

Our first day was kissed by sunlight as we travelled out into the 'boonies', countryside to us, to visit Orange County National Golf Centre & Lodge. This proved to be awesome in comparison with the courses our group manages. There are 36 holes on 584 acres. The greens are an average size of 2000 square metres, set among bunkers with pampas grass or trees set inside and a backdrop of pine flatwoods, natural oak hammocks and wetlands. They have the largest driving range in the world at 42 acres; circular in design with eight driving ranges all firing into the centre. They average 85,000 rounds per annum at \$135 each. The Superintendent, Carl Benedict, has a staff of 35 in winter and 45 for summer. The course is managed by a budget of \$2 million but this does include leasehold machinery. Whenever a member of staff meets with a golfer they stop and switch the machine off. That relates to lots of downtime per day and a serious wear and tear factor for the machines.

What really struck the group was the use of labour to maintain these big courses. The normal set-up consists of the superintendent, two skilled assistants, two to three mechanics and one to two irrigation technicians. The rest of the staff consists of Hispanics, Latinos, Guatemalans and Mexicans. These live together in groups near the course and stay for two to three years before going back home to family. They are trained to do specific tasks only.

What a difference to us where we have a smaller team but want all team members fully trained to a high level.



Above: Photographer Tony Dunstan gets on the other side of the camera for a change

Below: Sam McLean and Ronnie Bunting in discussion

Right: Close examinations



Above: The Orlando Convention Centre

Over the next few days we visited several other courses on our turfgrass field seminar. The most outstanding feature of the courses we visited like Magnolia Creek and Champions Gate is how they manage water. Summer temps are high with incredible evapotranspiration rates so the superintendents use lots of water. Orange County often applies one million gallons per day through 40,000 sprinklers. This seems extreme but the way they manage this usage is the key. Effluent water is pumped from Orlando and surrounding places like Disney's Celebration Village to large rectangular percolation basins called RIBS (Rapid Infiltration Basins). These are created on the natural soil that is very sandy. This soil allows 2.5m of rain to drain through in one

This page: Some sights you don't often see at UK golf clubs including, centre, a Pro Shop the size of a small department store!

A



Tread Lightly On The Land

We all make impressions. The osprey leaves bones from its last meal. The robin makes a rounded print in the sand. A towhee cries "drink your tea." There's wind in the pines and a butterfly floats by.

Come walk the woods as generations have before you. Seek the impressions of the preserve's inhabitants and diminish your own. Explore. Take notes and pictures. Share your discoveries.

Said Alice when she found Wonderland, "Curiouser and curiouser... now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was."

If you open out like Alice, what will you find?



hour. The effluent water goes back into the artesian water basin for use again but the golf courses can draw off this water for irrigation.

Another new build site at Magnolia Creek will cover 2100 acres with three 18 holes designed by Watson, Nicklaus & Palmer respectively. The irrigation requirements are awesome and will be supplied by a horizontal

well that extracts water from the water table and stores the water in a holding lake. When the course is irrigated the excess water will drain back into the water table to be reused, thereby creating a self-sufficient water supply.

Serious ecological mistakes were made years ago when the everglades were drained. Now in more enlightened times Florida is trying to do a U-turn and make sure the wetlands are protected from developers. We visited the Nature Conservancy Disney Wilderness Preserve. This is 12,000 acres of natural wetlands that have remained free of any development. It holds one of only two lakes in Florida that does not have any property built on the edge. When big companies like Disney build in Florida they have to agree to protect an area of land similar in size, to balance out the loss of land. This is how Disney Wilderness Preserve came into being. It was great for us to wander through such wilderness, spotting tortoise burrows and armadillos but luckily no snappers!

Florida is now in the process of opening up old watercourses to recreate the original wetlands and improve the bio-diversity in those areas.

Some of us were lucky enough to visit a course at Titusville, near Cape



Canaveral where a British greenkeeper, Geoff Coggan MG, CGCS resides. This course is set in the middle of wetlands with the 18-hole course weaving its way through several hundred road vehicle parks. It was great to get an escape from the surreal world of Orlando and visit authentic Florida. All in a day's work could be getting rid of nuisance alligators. These are ones that have become overly friendly due to people feeding them. Big holes need to be filled, made by Armadillos who can go some distance due to the sandy soil. The irrigation pumping system has to be checked regularly as this system is used by the fire department. It has a back up generator in case of powercuts. Many thanks to Geoff for his personal guide around the course.

Another seminar we attended covered professional presentations. My dialogue coming from Ronnie, at

Kilmacolm, Jim, at West Kilbride or Patrick, from Nefyn, was greeted with "Pardon?" or "Sorry?" as Mimi, our delectable instructor, deciphered the language. This is only Tuesday and already someone, no names mentioned, had the audacity to fall asleep! This caused ripples of comment for the ongoing activities. As this person, quite rightly, had to give a 10-minute presentation, the nine-crew members fell asleep in the back row. If any man can continue his presentation after this, he's a star.



THE FLORIDA EXPERIENCE



Below, below middle and right. The GCSAA Exhibition in full swing

Bottom: The Bernhard's team. Sam Nurse, Technical and Development Manager; Ulrich Kayser, Director of European Sales; Stephen Bernhard, Managing Director, and Sam McLean, Director of Sales and Marketing



In discussion with many superintendents they were interested how we managed to get such great results on our courses with such small budgets. It goes

to show we have very skilled greenkeepers in the UK who can produce first rate surfaces and a great course to match.

Ronnie Bunting has recently seen his course achieve the Award of Recognition for Environmental Achievements through the Committed to Green programme.

Ronnie has a fascinating story to tell, backed up by a document on how his course went about improving their environmental standing. Should anyone be interested to know more I know that Ronnie would be most helpful in your requests.

Thursday and Friday were a mixture of visits to the show or short seminars. It made me proud to realise just how well BIGGA organises the Harrogate show. For the first time I

was able to compare it with a similar show and I feel we give our international visitors something worthwhile. The GCSAA were celebrating their 75 years in fine style with a special showcase of historical artefacts and articles that took me quite some time to get through. The GCSAA has come a long way from humble beginnings but today they have an Association that is very big business. Harrogate had 8000 attend this year while the Orlando show had 20,000. Our group made good use of the Internet Cybercafe. This consisted of 10 consoles, set up by the GCSAA for use by members or visitors, free of charge. It was a great service and could be used to find out details of the show or seminars or simply to hassle the wife!

I became aware just how much money the GCSAA puts towards further education of their members. They have several programs that greenkeepers can apply for such as the Watson fellowships, the GCSAA Scholars competition or the Legacy awards. They produce several documents, free to members, that help give detailed information on a particular subject. Two that I found interesting that perhaps reflect present times are Managing Unemployment and How To Help Your Course Weather An Economic Downturn. Another sign of the times was the fact that many superintendents are now employed through a contract of employment that terminates after three to five years. The views on this among superintendents varies but the main emphasis seemed to be that the contract does give good security in your position and if you are doing a good job then the contract will be renewed.

A highlight of the trip was our Friday evening's activities. The

President's Dinner started with a long list of thanks from the outgoing President, Tommy Witt, and the new President being introduced. Several speeches later it ended with an emotional Tommy gathering his family together on stage, a moving and fitting tribute to those who had supported this man through the year. It was good to see Tommy's employer get up to give support and high praise of the man in charge of his business even though he had been off-site for a great part of the year.

Naturally we were all moved when Walter was presented with his Old Tom Morris Award. His speech was impeccable and did not need translating! It showed high regard for Walter that so many Scottish greenkeepers had travelled out to be with him for his special moment in their tartan cloth of the clan with sporrans gleaming. You could visibly see the strain of receiving this award drain away as he enjoyed the company of fellow greenkeepers throughout the evening. He must now be the most photographed greenkeeper on this planet, excepting Richard Barker of course, but Walter stands tall and proud as one of our greatest ambassadors, living proof that hard work and a keen interest in golf and greenkeeping can give you a good life.

It gave me great pride to see the BIGGA delegation in their blazers standing out in the crowd.

Later on in the evening we had the honour of a special invite to a private party given by Tommy Witt in the Peabody Hotel, a rather luxurious building indeed. This was the time to undo the collars and his superintendent colleagues treated Tommy to great ridicule as they told embarrassing stories. Later a slide show of the great moments of Tommy's year showed just how much he cares for





Above: The Bernhard Scholarship winners



Above: Congratulating Walter Woods on his Old Tom Morris Award

his profession and the effort and support from other board members to make a difference.

Stephen Bernhard and Sam Mclean were wonderful hosts, making sure they spent some time with each of the group at the various functions we attended. Their enthusiasm for helping greenkeepers expand their horizons is a great example to all who meet them. Whatever steps Bernhard & Co make in the future to co-host visits abroad or introduce Internships for young greenkeepers, I would urge members of BIGGA to apply for these places. You have so much to gain from such experiences and along the way promote the advantages of working within this industry. My short presentation ended with me making the point that our group of greenkeepers deserved to be on this trip because we had goals and were willing to strive for them.

You only get out of life what you put into it, so let's see more BIGGA members apply for educational visits and courses.

They should have no qualms about what level of new contacts or friendships are formed between our visiting party and the superintendents we met. I have already had several contacts through email from some of those I have met. It is true what they

say about the UK having a special relationship with the Americans. They were openly friendly and one could strike up conversation at any moment and find a warmth of friendship evident.

During my precious social time I treated myself to a visit to Islands of Adventure on my last day that came highly recommended by Sami, our authentic American ambassador, and found myself at one point in a line to travel the Hulk rollercoaster. As I trembled with fear for 30 minutes I struck up conversation with a huge fella from New Orleans. We talked golf among other things but he helped me get on that ride and survive it. Afterwards we laughed at the photo showing sheer fear on my face as he had gladly waved his arms in the air. Outside he introduced me to his wife and children who had been patiently waiting for him. Such contacts confirm that life is for living and I know the group I travelled with heartily thank Bernhard & Co for their sponsorship and BIGGA for their support in making this happen.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our intrepid greenkeeper travellers for their part in making this a memorable trip and especially Tony Dunstan who very quickly became the honorary Lord Lichfield in the group. I learned a lot about greenkeeping in our part of the world that would have been difficult any other way; such was the fine meeting of minds.

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SHARPER SOLUTIONS with BERNHARD

Roland Taylor looks at the improvements made in the modern day machinery workshop and looks at the whole issue of machinery maintenance

MAINTENANCE FACILITY

The workshop area turned out to be a corner of the machinery store. The floor was earth, which had dried out to a dust and the only light was from one florescent tube so a great deal of the area was in shadow. A small bench was set against the wall, so obviously, a lot of the work had to be carried out on the floor. There was a heater, but judging by its size, the heat it emitted would barely take the chill off on a cold winters day. Old half-dismantled machines, that had clearly seen better days, were littered around the perimeter. What little space there was, would be almost completely taken up if a machine were brought in for repair. Containers full of black sludge and fuel were

The modern day workshop is a highly technical place

heaped in one corner. The air was rancid with the smell of burnt oil and earthiness and the overall appearance was a place where you would not want to linger in, or worse carry out any service work.

No, this is not the first chapter of a Dickensian novel, it is a slightly over the top description of the type of machinery storage cum workshop, that could be found not so many years ago. Thank goodness those days have passed and today the picture is generally completely different, although having said that, there maybe some

elements of the scenario still about.

Over the last two decades considerable changes have taken place in both the golf course and outdoor power equipment industries. In the former, we have seen considerable growth and with it a higher profile that has placed greater demands on all those involved in course management. Part of this has been in the machinery sector, where their upkeep is critical to a smooth operation. This has led to more courses now carrying out all their service work with dedicated staff and workshops.

On the manufacturers' front some of the big names have been merged, while other companies are becoming well established. The dealerships have also changed with quite a number of previously well-known names falling by the wayside. Others have grown larger.

There are now fewer firms around specialising in the professional equipment sector. This has led to some suppliers having to sell direct and find service outlets to cover warranty, plus service work.

What is even more of a concern, is that fewer people are coming into the business to be trained as service technicians.

What are the benefits of a good service programme?

Obviously, it is necessary to keep equipment running and producing an optimum performance with minimal downtime, but there are other reasons.

Safety is a very important one, especially as television advertising encourages the public to make claims for any injury. Badly maintained machinery is dangerous. The Health & Safety Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations under Section 6 maintenance states:-



1. Every employer shall ensure that work equipment is maintained in an efficient state of working order and good repair.
2. Every employer shall ensure that where any machine has a maintenance log it is kept up to date.

The regulations also cover routine and planned preventive maintenance.

Another Section, which applies to a workshop, is lighting. The guidance here is that any place where work equipment is issued should be suit-

TIES

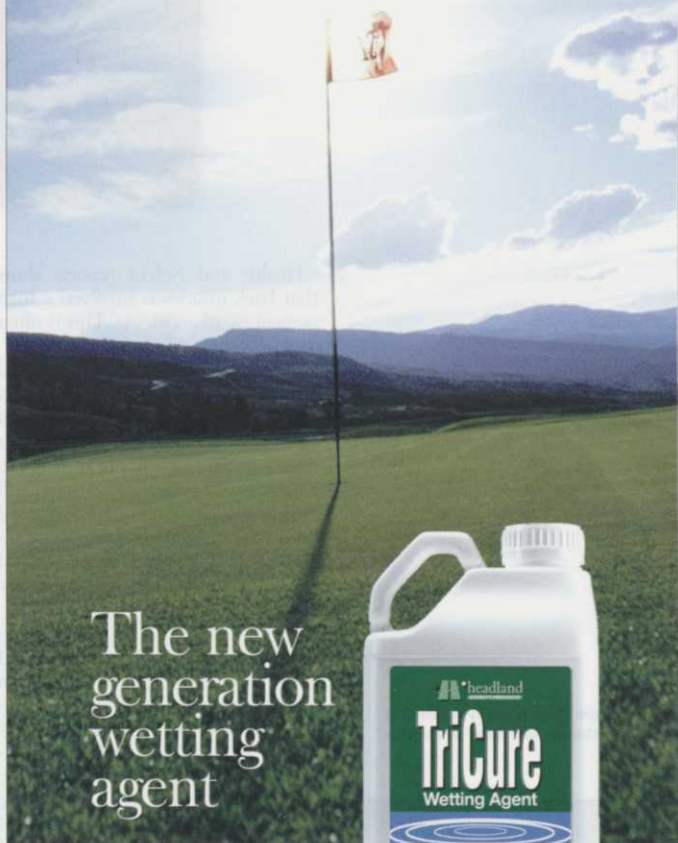


ably and sufficiently lit. Lighting should be adequate for the needs of the task.

Electrical safety also requires careful monitoring. Earth leakage circuit breakers (ELCB) or residual control devices (RCD) should be fitted to all hand-held electrical equipment. All portable electrical equipment must be PAT tested and carry a certificate. The equipment should also be marked stating the date and signature of the tester. A competent person who has been trained in this field

should test the equipment. Electricians should be members of the Electrical Contractor Association ECA and or NIC, EIC. These units require regular checks to ensure they are still operational. Charging batteries needs to be done in a well-ventilated area, away from any possible source ignition. Cleaning solvents and petrol should be stored in the correct containers and in a cool environment. Make sure any protective clothing, gloves and eye protectors are readily available.

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MAINTENANCE FACILITIES



Health and Safety reports show that back injuries is involved a high percentage of accidents. This is often due to incorrect handling of loads.

In a workshop environment it could be due to lifting a heavy unit onto a workbench. The installation of hydraulic workbenches, suitable for lifting all the machines in the fleet to a comfortable working height, will reduce the possibilities of a strained back. This will also improve the working conditions considerably and speed up repair or servicing operations.

Another reason for regular maintenance is investment care - well looked after machinery can command a higher trade-in value. There is reputed to be a course, in the States, where

the workshop resembles an operating theatre and the equipment is looked after to the highest of level. As a result when they replace machines there is a waiting list for the old ones - the prices they command justify the care and attention the workshop and operators lavish on their fleet.

Exhaust pollution is very much under the spotlight and engine manufacturers have to comply with stringent legislation regarding the levels emitted by new power units leaving their factories. Once out in the field it is up to users to ensure that their equipment is correctly serviced if low levels are to be maintained.

Two other areas of benefit are better management of costings and greater control of day to day course management.

For those considering carrying out all their own servicing what is involved? A starting point is to carry out an analysis of the total maintenance costs the previous two years. It is also a good idea to try and identify the amount of down time and the reasons for it.

The big question is, would there be enough work to keep a dedicated service technician fully employed? This is an important factor, bearing in mind modern machines are becoming increasingly more sophisticated. The person will need an extensive knowledge and be able to work on a wide range of systems, including all types of engines, modern hydraulics and electronics. With his or her extensive knowledge and expertise they will not be happy if they are expected to carry out mundane work, outside their sphere, to fill in time.

Setting up a workshop will entail considerable investment, so every avenue needs exploring. The right

working conditions are critical for both efficiency and harmony. The building should have plenty of both natural and artificial light and enough space to comfortably work on the largest unit is a must. Restricted access makes for all kinds of problems. Cleanliness is paramount when dealing with modern engines and precision components, such as fuel injectors and hydraulic systems. To clean these items to the high standard necessary will require a special washing unit.

A hard surfaced area outside with adequate drainage is need. Here machines can be cleaned down using a pressure washer before going into the workshop. For those courses deciding to set up a full operation, there will be a large shopping list, including grinders, tools, drills welders and electrical/electronic testing equipment.

At this point the question arises, is it worth it. If the answer is no, what are the alternatives?

A regular daily and weekly maintenance programme is a must, so a special bay or area should be set aside

Below. Having easily accessible storage is a huge advantage

