

How to Handle an Employee's Impaired Capability to Perform

One of the toughest people-related safety problems the first-line supervisor is faced with is that of the employee with a mental or physical deficiency. Some of these deficiencies could be the result of partially incapacitating injuries, illness, extreme fatigue, drug and alcohol abuse and emotional disturbances. Such conditions can affect strength, stamina, dexterity, coordination, concentration, judgement, memory, mental alertness, reasoning and so on. Substantial evidence has indicated that an alarmingly high percentage of accidents are caused primarily by impaired physical or mental conditions.

The first step in taking care of this problem is to detect and identify the problem. The only way this can be done is to be conscious of each individual worker.

Generally, the first-line supervisor gets to know his people well enough to detect any abnormality in their behavior. There are some specific symptoms that could alert the supervisor to a problem. The supervisor should be aware of unreported injuries that may have been suffered on or off the job. Telltale signs could be limping and other movements that suggest an injury is being favored, homemade bandages and complaints about injuries sustained on or off the job.

An employee who is inattentive or physically spent, or one who shows signs of sleepiness, irritability or poorly coordinated movements could be displaying signs of fatigue or a hangover. Being hungover could be almost as bad, in some jobs, as being intoxicated.

Dizzy spells, vomiting, unsteadiness and an uncharacteristically pale or flushed complexion could well be signs of an illness that may render an employee unable to work safely.

Excitable talking and gesticulation, startled reactions to sound, trembling and talking to one's self could be signs of emotional agitation.

Surely, however, the symptoms of any type of physical or mental deficiency could not be exactly described in an article, so the best indicator is behavior abnormal to the employee's general personality.

Just as symptoms cannot be described in a hard and fast rule, the details of how to handle any given case cannot be described either. Such details depend upon the nature of the disability or impairment, your knowledge of the person, the nature of the work situation and established organizational practices.

However, some general steps for dealing with such cases can be recommended. First, check with the employee to verify the initial impression. The general tone of such a check should be one of sympathetic inquiry. Second, unless your check with the employee completely eliminates your initial impression of a problem, discuss the case with your immediate supervisor to decide how to handle it.

When solving these problems, remember these general do's and don'ts:

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In the case of suspected intoxication, do not take a chance on an alcoholic condition. Handle the employee with tact. Don't accuse the employee of being drunk. Your objective should be to get the employee out of the work environment with the least amount of disturbance.

In the case of emotional disturbance, do not try to play the role of psychiatrist, psychologist or family counselor. Avoid advising the employee on how to handle the problem. Do listen if the employee wants to talk about the problem. Many emotionally disturbed persons calm down once they have talked about their problems to a willing listener. Limit your advice to persuading such persons to consult their physician. The latter knows where to take it from there.

In the case of acute illness, don't take a chance on the following symptoms: abdominal and chest pains, unaccountable vomiting, violent trembling, disabling weakness, acute head pains, extreme nervous agitation, visual disturbances, unconscious states, breathing difficulty, loss of muscular control, repetitive attacks of dizziness or signs of internal bleeding. Such symptoms call for professional medical attention.

By handling these sorts of cases effectively and tactfully, you can, in addition to preventing potential accidents, develop a sincere feeling of respect and willingness to cooperate among your employees.

—Bill England

Divots, Miami Valley Golf Course Supts. Assn.

Wetting Agents Help in Water Short Year

by Demie M. Powell

The water shortage is here again! (As if you need to be told.) What can be done now to minimize turf losses where you cannot irrigate or must significantly reduce your water consumption? Not a whole lot — except to pray for rain and use wetting agents.

Wetting agents don't make water, but they do make the most out of what water is there. Wetting agents can maximize reduced water resources several ways. First, they improve infiltration so less water runs off or sits on the surface and evaporates.

Second, wetting agents help water wet the soil profile more uniformly, preventing localized dry spots. This reduces stress and keeps these areas from going dormant. It also reduces hand watering which uses up water that is probably needed elsewhere.

Third, wetting agents allow a greater percentage of the soil moisture to be available to the roots of your turf. In other words, you can go longer between waterings which will help reduce your total water consumption.

All of this means you can get by with less water and less turf loss. That will be good for you, your course and your club. It will also be good for the whole turf industry as you show your state that you are doing everything in your power to conserve water by using it wisely.

Wetting agents are not "cure-alls" or "miracle products" — they do not create water. But they do stretch your water supplies so you and your course can survive restricted water use and drought.

Lightning A Flash in the Sky

If we lived during the time of the Ancient Romans, we would believe that thunder and lightning were the weapons of the god Jupiter. Ancient Romans thought that such powerful and deadly weapons could belong only to the greatest of gods. Thunder and lightning was one of the great mysteries of nature.

Now the mystery is solved. We know, through scientific study, that lightning is really a flow of electricity, formed high above the earth. One thing that has not changed over the years is it can make us quake in our boots and raise our heart rate with the anxiety of seeing a bolt of lightning and waiting to hear the crack of thunder. Before you can say, "YIPES!", your pet dog has run under the bed or found some place to hide. All creatures great and small have an instinctive respect for lightning.

Do you know how lightning produces thunder? As lightning travels, it heats the air in its path. The sudden heating causes the air to expand violently. The cool air farther away is pressed into a smaller space. This process starts a great air wave that results in THUNDER.

Before you hear the thunder, flashes of lightning take place between a positively charged area and a negatively charged area. These may be different parts of the same cloud, different clouds, or a cloud and the earth.

A spark between a cloud and the earth may measure as much as eight miles in length. It may travel at a rate of 100,000,000 feet a second. Lightning that reaches between oppositely charged clouds may have a length of 20 miles. Photographs of lightning obtained by radar indicate that some cloud-to-cloud lightning strikes may measure 100 miles in length.

Lightning between clouds does not cause any damage on earth, because the electrical energy is dispersed in the air. But lightning between a cloud and the earth often causes loss of life and property. A bolt of lightning can kill a person or start a forest fire. Scientists have found that one stroke of lightning usually measures more than 15,000,000 volts.

There Are Different Kinds of Lightning

All lightning strikes are basically about the same. But they appear to have different forms, depending on the position of the observer.

FORKED, ZIGZAG, OR CHAIN lightning is a chain of brilliant light that appears to zigzag. It actually follows a winding path, like a river. The single streak of lightning often breaks into several branches or forks.

SHEET lightning has no particular form. It is usually a bright flash that spreads all over the horizon and lights up the sky. Sheet lightning is really light from a flash or chain lightning that takes place beyond the horizon.

HEAT lightning, often seen on summer evenings, is the same as sheet lightning, but the flashes are fainter. Thunder usually does not accompany them. The lightning occurs too far away for thunder to be heard.

BALL lightning seems to consist of balls of fire, as small as walnuts or as large as balloons, that last about three to five seconds. They fall swiftly from the clouds until they strike the ground and explode. Sometimes they roll slowly along the ground and do not explode until they hit an obstacle. Ball lightning is the least understood of all forms of lightning. Many

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