

“Computer Safeguards”

by Eugene Young

The ease of use and affordability of microcomputers has resulted in widespread usage by individuals and small businesses. The golf course superintendent is no exception. Microcomputers are used to schedule maintenance, employees and irrigation as well as perform administrative functions. Although it won't replace the gang mower, the computer has become an important tool. In order to maximize the benefits of its use, an adequate level of operating knowledge is needed.

A very important aspect of operating a computer is one of the least discussed. Basic safeguards against common hazards are not usually a hot topic. However, without exercising basic safeguards, your computer and the data (hours of work) you are maintaining on the computer and diskettes are susceptible to damage and/or loss. Among the hazards to avoid are:

Static	Liquids
Magnetic fields	Dirt

All the information on your computer is kept in the form of magnetic fields. If you overwrite information with new information, the computer rearranges the magnetic fields. A discharge of static electricity can not only rearrange the magnetic fields into a non readable mess, it can also destroy the integrated circuits and other small physical components inside your computer. To avoid static charges, you can take several precautions:

Maintain an adequate humidity level in the room with the computer

Use non static rugs around the computer

Touch a grounding strip (available in computer stores) before touching the computer

Use an anti-static spray periodically

Any other magnetic fields that come within proximity of the computer can also affect the integrity of the data. These other fields can come from the telephone, a screwdriver, a paper clip or any other metallic object or a device using an electrical coil. The answer is to keep these items away from the computer and diskettes.

Liquids and electrical devices have never mixed with favorable results. Spilling coffee on the keyboard will cause the contacts underneath the keys to short or insulate the contacts, rendering your computer useless. Liquids should also be kept away from diskettes. While liquids won't affect the magnetic fields, the liquid could cause the diskette to become physically unreadable by the computer. If you are drinking liquids near your computer, keep the container on a table or desk other than the one with the computer and diskettes.

Dirt is another problem for computers. This can be in the form of soil, sand, dust, smoke and pollen. These miniscule particles can rest on the surface of the diskettes and affect the way the computer reads or writes the information. Keep the diskettes in covered storage boxes which can be obtained at computer stores or anywhere office supplies are bought. These are inexpensive and offer an easy way to organize your diskettes as well as protect them. Dirt particles can also enter the computer and monitor through the air vents. The vents are needed

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to keep the internal parts from overheating, but allow dirt to enter and rest on the components. An accumulation could insulate the parts from the cooling air, cause them to overheat and damage or destroy them. When not in use, a cover should be placed over the computer and monitor. These are available for specific machines or a universal cover can be bought. Periodic internal cleaning by a trained computer service technician is also recommended.

One action which can help recover lost data is to perform periodic back ups. This can be done by keeping duplicate copies of data files or creating back up files on a designated set of diskettes. Back up files are created by special programs that are readily available. The back up diskettes are used to restore lost data. Frequent back ups will minimize the amount of data to be recreated when a loss occurs.

While today's microcomputers are not as sensitive as the large mainframe computers which require specific operating temperatures and humidity levels, common sense care does need to be taken. A few precautions against common workplace hazards can result in continuous, dependable performance from your computer.

If you have any questions or need more details regarding this or any other computer related topic, contact your computer consultant.

1992 MAGCS Golf Committee Monthly Meeting Schedule and Duties

The following is a list of meetings for 1992 and the duties of each committee member for each meeting. The duties are as follows:

Event Chairman — Coordinate all pre-event plans. Arrange for merchandise prize amounts, what type of prizes, and where purchased.

Pre-event Co-Chairman — Plan on being at the meeting site 1½-2 hours before tee time. You will have a copy of the tee assignments for all pre-registered players. Make sure all players handicap is recorded. Deal with any cancellations and sign up any player showing the day of the event. Make sure those players have a place to play but are not entered in the event. Give a final entry list to the pro shop before leaving to play.

Post-Event Co-Chairman — Work with the event chairman to do any scoring that needs to be done after the event to decide the prize winners. Assist with the distribution and record keeping of prizes at the conclusion of the event.

1992 Events and Committee Assignments

June 22 — Flossmore C.C. — Event is a 2 Man Total team. Prizes will be low gross and low net. The team score will be determined by totaling both players handicap, and taking 80% of the total. This number will be subtracted from the total for a team net score.

Event Chairman — Kerry Blatteau

Pre-Event co-chairman — Paul Bastron

Post-event co-chairman — Mike Bavier

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