

Ozone Action Days in Golf Course Management

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I was delighted to receive a fax from the EPA in June of 1995 urging me to join Ozone Action Days (OAD). OAD is an alliance of participating Chicago-area businesses joined together in an effort to establish methods of eliminating, or at least minimizing, activities thought to damage the ozone (a.k.a. pure, fresh air). A typical OAD is a hazy day with 85°F. plus daytime high temperature, high humidity, and poor air circulation (0-8 mph). An OAD has a good potential for poor air quality aggravated by activities such as emissions from diesel, gas, and two-cycle engines; gaseous emissions while fueling equipment; emissions when using an oxygen and acetylene torch; industrial emissions; etc. The ozone on an OAD is especially influenced by these activities between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

All participants in OADs receive a fax bulletin alerting their businesses the day prior to an OAD. The EPA sends all participants a list of ideas and basic examples to follow so that a list of activities can be formed by each individual manager to fit his particular business and to be put into effect on OADs. The following is a list of activities we put into effect on OADs:

1. The hours were from 6:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. and changed to 3:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
2. Promoted car pooling.
3. Fueled equipment before 8 a.m.
4. Performed almost all jobs requiring diesel, unleaded, or two-cycle fuel prior to 9 or 10 a.m.
5. Often performed jobs after 9 a.m. or 10 a.m. NOT requiring the use of diesel, unleaded, or two-cycle engines. Some examples are: pick up branches and litter; hand rake edges of traps; weed traps and flower beds by hand; fix high and low plugs on greens; fix ball marks on greens; eradicate chickweed on greens via physical removal; trim with a knife around sprinkler heads, yardage markers and CDGA markers; service ball washers; collect refuse; seed and soil divots; service equipment without running engines, etc.
6. Used electric carts for general transportation of the maintenance staff.
7. Postponed lunch break until 11 a.m.
8. Avoided rush hour traffic.

The seven of eight employees who voluntarily participated in OADs were rewarded with an extended (45-minute) lunch break. The participants were given a free lunch and paid during lunch break. The preceding benefits were served up as an incentive to participate in OADs. The employees commented that on OADs, they preferred to be working early because the temperatures were lower or cooler. The staff members enjoyed the freedom of working on the greens well in advance of play. The crew was able to finish repairing all ball marks, pushing down all plugs, cutting most of the cups, servicing all ball washers, collecting all refuse by the tees and parking lot, moving all tee markers, raking some traps, and mowing most of the greens, tees, and fairways without feeling pressure from the golfers.

We will continue to participate in OADs. We will continue to treat every work day in June, July, and August like an OAD so that it becomes a seasonal routine for us.

For additional information on Ozone Action Days, you may contact Brian Urbaszewski at the Partners for Clean Air Steering Committee. Phone 312-454-0400, Ext. 409, or fax 312-454-0411. ■