

Central Florida Crowfoots



By RICK KAISER
Employee on Maintenance Staff
Bay Hill Club

Golf Course Maintenance Safety . . .

In any type of employment, there are safety measures required for particular hazards. While working in golf course maintenance, many levels of safety have to be acknowledged and practiced. In order to perform a particular job, consideration has to be made on the degree of hazard and all safety measures taken first. Equipment operation, facilities, chemical awareness and use are categories on a golf course that safety has to be part of the job.

EQUIPMENT OPERATION

The first step in operating equipment properly is to read and understand all directions and safety measures attached to the machines. Any further safety tips will usually come with the parts and repair manual. Toe guards or steel-toed shoes should be worn when operating any walk mowers. Many accidents occur when mowing steep slopes, so precautions should be taken to protect the feet.

Goggles play a major role in safety when operating small hand equipment. This is especially important when using a weedeater, edger, or electric trimmer. Flying debris can sometimes cause permanent damage to the eyes. In some cases, a full face shield would be an ideal safety measure against large particles.

For some reason or another, many operators shrug the idea of using a hard hat. It may be uncomfortable during summer heat, but this precaution is directly for the operator's benefit. One purpose in utilizing a hard hat is to protect the head from flying golf balls during the use of large equipment — (gang mowers, tractors, etc). Many times the operator finds himself or herself directly in the line of play and the individual should take precautions against injury.

Seldom do we acknowledge that small safety measures should be taken daily on all operating equipment. Inspections should be made on all

machines to check for loose nuts, bolts, screws, or any moveable parts. It is proper not to dress with loose clothing or jewelry that could become caught in moving parts of a unit. Do not remove a fuel tank cap while an engine is running. Ignited fumes can cause serious damage. Do not use equipment when you are tired or sick. Not only are you endangering yourself, but you're endangering workers and players around you. Always store fuel properly and designate areas where sharp tools are to be placed.

There are many preventive safety measures to become aware of and new personnel should be properly trained to handle any equipment that can be hazardous.

MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

In general, most accidents that occur in or around the maintenance facility, happen in the repair shop. Golf course maintenance can be dangerous when you consider the large amount of reel and rotary mowers that have to be sharpened or repaired. It is a good practice to utilize heavy gloves when sharpening and lapping reels or blades. Obviously, maintenance mechanics cannot wear gloves to work on engines, but safety gloves should be available when needed. Excess grease, debris, or worn parts should be checked on a scheduled basis to prevent machine hazards from occurring when equipment is in operation. Operators and mechanics should work very closely, making sure all safety conditions and methods are used with equipment.

All maintenance buildings should be constructed of relatively fire-resistant materials. There is an abundance of materials used in golf course maintenance that are fire hazards and you have to obtain proper storage. For example, all pesticides should be stored in a well ventilated room. There should be good lighting, enough insulation to prevent chemical freeze or overheat, and the storage room should have a lock on the door. Chemical labels will

have proper storage requirements and should be read when received. Pesticide poisoning is one of the worst safety hazards that can occur in golf course maintenance. Maintenance facilities should always have on hand current first-aid supplies which are properly stored and approved by a physician. Any pesticide applicator should tell his doctor which chemicals the individual uses; the doctor can study the symptoms, and treatment with antidotes can be readily available.

CHEMICAL AWARENESS AND USE

When a chemical contains ingredients that can cause injury, labels are attached to the container to provide information on toxic levels and designate safety measures to prevent poisoning. Special labels indicate the level of safety to be taken. DANGER and POISON on the label indicate the highest degree of toxic material, WARNING indicates a moderate toxic level, and CAUTION has a slightly toxic level which still should be treated with utmost care.

All accidental pesticide contamination is contracted by consuming the product, inhaling, or poisoning through the skin. There are many state and federal laws regarding restricted pesticide safety and use. That is the reason why golf course applicators have to be certified. Applicators learn safety measures used by the Environmental Protection Agency and to recognize symptoms of chemical poisoning. Preventive safety measures such as checking for the smallest hole in rubber gloves can prevent contamination. The following list of safety equipment should be readily available

for pesticide applicators.

1. Coveralls
2. Hat
3. Rubber Gloves
4. Goggles
5. Respirator
6. Rubber Boots

Caring and safety ride very close together in golf course maintenance and every crew member should take pride in his job performance. ■

Tees & Q's

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that will provide a program to help avoid these problems in the future. Neighboring golf clubs have a local common interest in the sharing of any turfgrass information. The entire turfgrass industry in Florida can use any segment of turfgrass pest management to help assemble much needed information on turfgrass management.

An example of sharing information is the cooperative efforts of the University of Florida Turfgrass Research Personnel, turfgrass consultants, equipment and turfgrass suppliers, the FTGA, the FGCSA, and concerned golf course superintendents to try to assemble more facts about Bermudagrass Decline. This particular disease problem has enlisted more friendship and cooperation among industry leaders than any one turfgrass management item within the last couple of years. So be a leader and don't be afraid to discuss local problems experienced on your golf course. Just remember that we are all in the information sharing business. ■

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