

DIVOTS

By **EDDIE SNIPES**
Selva Marina Country Club



“Night Shift on the Golf Course”

Finally, the end of the day and our golf course superintendent is ready for a good supper and an extra good night's sleep. Arriving at work the next morning, the superintendent finds that the “Night Shift” has paid him a visit. Golf course flags are ripped from the standards, tee markers have disappeared. Looking further, the superintendent finds golf carts in traps, on top of greens, and carts sitting on top of irrigation controllers. The dreaded Night Shift has been around and left vandalism, its ugly trademark.

This type of Night Shift activity will rarely happen at clubs having roving 24-hour security and camera monitoring systems. Not every superintendent has these luxuries. So how do the rest of us folks deter the Night Shift and its unfortunate consequences?

If your golf course is fortunate enough to be surrounded by dwellings of some type (homes, condos, etc.), the superintendent should try to make friends with as many neighbors as possible. The more friendly eyes watching the course the better. So put on that public relations smile and go to it!

On the golf course, flags having numbers or logos might be substituted for solid color flags that have less attractive value for vandals or “night time tourists.” Use your nicer flags for special occasions. This would also apply to special tee markers that some Night Shift personnel see as excellent souvenirs. Trap rakes that are made of fiberglass might also save you from having to replace broken wooden ones.

Around the maintenance building, good lighting is essential as a deterrent for Night Shift visitors. The more lighting the better. Check door jambs and windows for potential jimmying or pry points. Using metal strips to cover these areas where crowbars or pipes can be used to pry open an entrance way would be advised. Use extra heavy locks and clasps which make removing them time consuming and noisy. Bars over window areas that are easily accessible might also aid in saving entry of Night Shift people into your maintenance complex. Postings of “No Trespassing” or guard dog signs might be useful as a psychological deterrent whether you have a guard dog in your maintenance area or not. Giving your local police and fire departments a back gate key or a key to gain entrance to your golf course for patrolling or in case of fire is also an excellent idea.

Check with local authorities to find out what you legally have the right to do if Night Shift people are caught by you on your club grounds. Laws can be confusing so protect yourself by knowing what actions you can take when witnessing Night Shift people at work. Do not over react and take the law into your own hands. This could be far more detrimental to yourself than the vandals.

Hopefully, you have already taken preventative measures to stop the dreaded Night Shift visitors. If not, take a good look at your maintenance area and golf course borders. Implement as many safeguards as you can and get that extra good night sleep with a pleasant morning combination. ■

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