

Get one up on the UVs before they get you

By SCOTT CYBULSKI

Lately, there has been a lot of talk about people who work in offices spending so much time in front of computer screens that they need protection from radiation.

If unseen harmful rays from these relatively low light sources are a concern, wouldn't protection from the sun, the greatest light source known to man, be an overall priority to turf managers who spend much of their time working outdoors?

It is becoming common knowledge that skin cancer experts recommend strong sunscreen for people who spend much time outdoors. Likewise, eye care experts suggest they be equally concerned about eye protection from sunlight. Protection from visible light is a problem because it is believed that excess visible light can damage the eye's retina. Ultraviolet rays (UV) are the primary concern because overexposure can damage the lens, cornea and retina of the eye and potentially lead to cataracts.

Further down the light spectrum is blue light, which is thought to cause long-term damage to the retina. Of the one million cataracts removed each year in the United States, almost one hundred thousand may be sun-related and preventable (*The Wellness Encyclopedia, Houghton-Mifflin, University of California, Berkeley*).

When shopping for light-absorbing sunglasses, there are certain qualities to look for. The most effective glasses block 75 to 90 percent of all visible light. The only standard for UV light protection is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

ANSI standards for UV are 380 nanometers (nm) in the light spectrum (however UV extends to 400 nm). Glasses that offer protection to 400 to 510 nm block blue light. A qualified salesperson at a quality sunglasses retailer should be able to show you the glasses that offer this superior light absorption. Additionally, many finer department stores are offering designer sunglasses that are marked "Z80.3" indicating ANSI quality lens production and can be purchased at fairly reasonable prices.

Sunglass types differ and should be chosen for protection. Although many types offer superior light absorption, a certain type may be advantageous in a particular

application. Polarized lenses are preferred by fishermen for blocking glare on the water's surface. Mirrored lenses reflect the high amount of light given off by snow, and are chosen by skiers for that reason.

Gray photochromatic (light sensitive) lenses may be the answer for conditions encountered on the landscape.

The gray tint offers the least color distortion, a preferable quality for those who are often

observing variations in turf color and wilt. Photochromatic lenses offer an advantageous quality by their ability to adapt to the changing light conditions encountered on the golf course, from dark, shady areas to very bright sand bunkers.

In addition, there are other advantages offered from various types of lenses. Brown or amber tint offers superior light protection and enhanced contrast in haze and fog. Polarized lenses

offer great glare protection in all conditions. In certain applications, plastic lenses may be preferable to glass because of their lighter weight and less tendency to fog.

Finally, choosing sunglasses is a personal preference. For safety concerns, choose for light absorption and fit around the eyes.

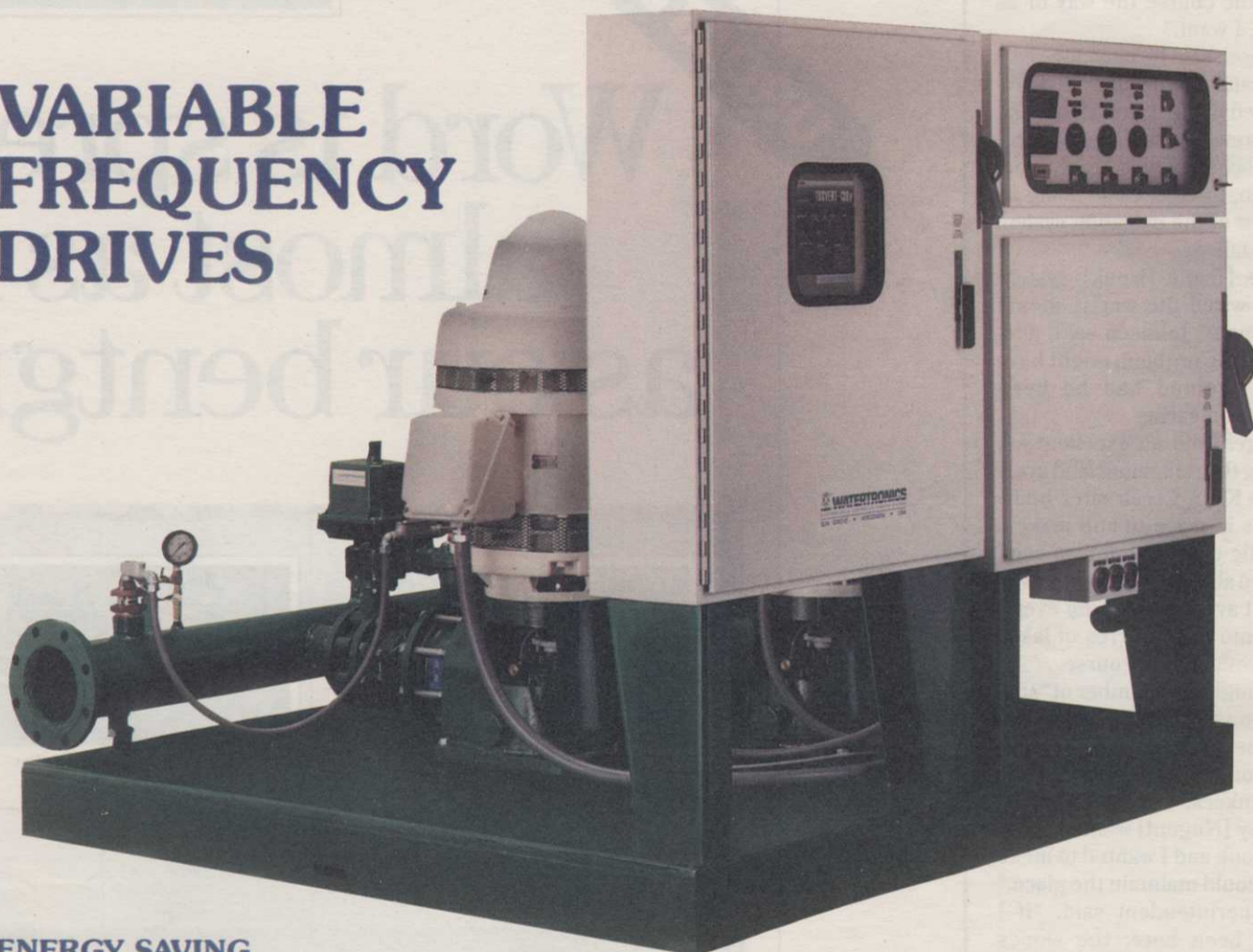
For personal preference, choose for tint, comfort and style.

MAINE GCSA GIVES FIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

PORTLAND, Maine — The Maine Golf Course Superintendents Association has presented five scholarships. The MGCSA gave a \$1,000 scholarship to Scott Brinkerhoff, who is attending the University of Massachusetts' Stockbridge School. Selected to receive \$500 scholarships were Russell A. Bragg, Jeffrey E. Ewing, Clayton E. Longfellow and Michael F. Ridley.

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Scott Cybulski is the assistant superintendent at Falmouth (Maine) Country Club. This story was reprinted with permission from *Mainly Green*, the official publication of the Maine Golf Course Superintendents Association.