

## Effective safety program begins with proper equipment

When it comes to meeting government mandated safety regulations for grounds workers, most superintendents know the basics. Many safety precautions are common sense – you need hearing protection when working around noisy equipment and you need safety goggles when working with mowing, weed-eating or chainsaw equipment.

However, it is important to periodically review your work environment to identify specific hazards that your employees are exposed to and make sure you have a good understanding of the minimum safety requirements mandated by law.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to provide a workplace that is free from recognized health and safety hazards and to protect employees from those hazards when and where they occur. State laws vary and may be more stringent.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Federal Insecticide, Rodenticide and Fungicide Act relates to pesticide use and establishes the Worker Protection Standard

(WPS) that applies to pesticide application activities such as mixing, loading, application and cleanup. It also applies to those working in or around treated areas and establishes restricted entry intervals for each pesticide and the minimum personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to handle and apply each product.

The following list provides safety equipment recommendations for activities around the golf course that warrant proper safety procedures.

**LOUD EQUIPMENT**  
• Earplugs with a suitable decibel rating, reusable or disposable,

corded or uncorded. A higher decibel rating (26dB - 31dB) covers all applications if using a variety of equipment.

• Eye protection should include ANSI-approved, UV-filtering safety glasses with impact protection, preferably with peripheral side protection.

• Teflon-coated chainsaw chaps will stop the blade on contact.

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Respirators, gloves and coveralls are essential equipment when handling chemicals

## Reduce accidents

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percent of the golf shots are usually 15 percent off line and that equipment and golf ball improvements result in even longer distances today.

• Ventilation systems in golf car storage buildings, acid storage, battery disposal, energy management and equipment wash facilities are all areas for potential accidents.

• Are golf car paths appropriately located, designed, engineered, constructed and maintained? Is speed controlled and are warning signs posted at hills?

• Pedestrian paths, steps and bridges need to be free from trip and slip hazards.

• Trees are a source of numerous accidents on courses. Inspections should monitor the potential for eye injury from low-hanging branches as well as injury from falling branches.

• Practice range accidents can occur if the range is improperly designed, maintained and operated. Are tee stations adequately separated, are protective barriers in place, and are participants properly controlled?

### OPERATIONS

Proper maintenance procedures are required to present the golf course for play, but risk management and safety

should be of equal importance.

• Environmental concerns relative to pesticides, fertilizers, water quality and quantity and energy need to be addressed. Misuse or abuse of these materials can lead to serious damage and significant exposure to liability.

• Golf course construction projects may be a source of accidents. Are open

trenches properly marked? Is every care taken when digging around utilities? Are trenches protected against cave-in? Is your golf course's equipment adequate for the task?

• Waste management and recycling in an appropriate manner can prevent environmental contamination.

• Safety training for general maintenance operations such as mowing, fertilization, irrigation, aeration and topdressing is important for accident prevention.

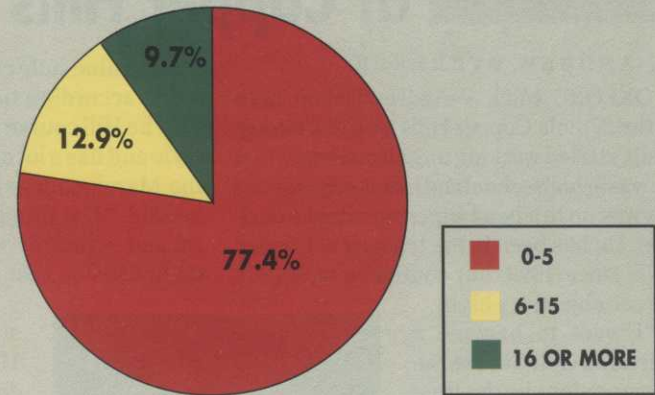
• Personal protective equipment must be provided, fitted and used when required. Current Occupational Safety and Health Administration policies could potentially result in heavy fines being imposed on employers who don't follow the requirements to provide workers with hard hats, goggles, fit-tested respirators and safety spray suits, and other protective gear needed for personal protection.



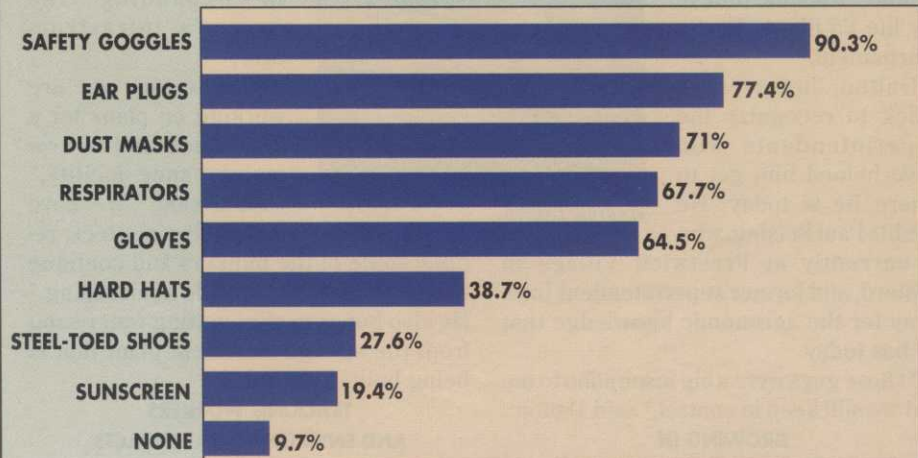
Golf car paths need to be free of trip hazards

## GOLF COURSE NEWS NEWS POLL

HOW MANY DAYS DID YOUR STAFF LOSE TO WORK-RELATED INJURIES LAST YEAR?



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE EMPLOYEES REQUIRED TO USE DURING CERTAIN OR ALL ACTIVITIES?



❖ "I have my foreman train all new employees on proper procedure. The other tenured crew will then help to enforce the use of appropriate safety equipment. I do provide all the safety equipment needed, and if an employee would like additional equipment, I will obtain that product."  
— Robert Shanholtz, Jr. GCS, Fountain Head CC

❖ "We use videos, hands on training and a company-wide safety committee to enforce our policies. We supply all safety equipment at no cost to employees. Enforcement is quite simple: the first time you get a warning, second you get three days off, and the third, you don't work here anymore."  
— Mike Kosak, Director of Agronomy, Lahontan GC

• Repetitive-motion problems are common in golf course maintenance operations. Precautions to avoid injury to employees who hold their wrists, arms or shoulders in odd positions or who frequently perform the same tasks continuously for long periods need to be in place.

### VEHICLES

Drivers and passengers of utility vehicles and golf cars need to follow the same precautions as one would in their own motor vehicles.

• Is there a program to verify that state operators licenses are current before the employee is permitted to drive company vehicles on public roads?

• Golf cars carry enormous liability. Be sure that there is a program in place to review and service vehicles prior to each use. Problem vehicles should be kept out-of-service until repaired.

• Employees should be carefully trained before using utility vehicles.

### EMERGENCIES, NATURAL DISASTERS AND WEATHER

Preparing to manage unforeseen emergencies is the first and most important step to recovery, should a disaster strike.

• Having written emergency response guidelines ensures that employees un-

derstand their duties and responsibilities and may significantly reduce liability in the event of a natural disaster.

• Defibrillators belong on golf courses where cardiac arrests occur. It may soon be a greater liability risk for businesses that fail to purchase and use automated external defibrillators.

• Employees and guests should be adequately trained in fire safety and prevention programs.

• Employees and golfers need to be educated about heat stroke, sunburn and the danger of skin cancer.

• Caution golfers about the presence of poisonous plants, snakes, alligators, fire ants, etc. Evidence of awareness will generally reduce liability awards should a suit result from injury from these hazards.

Effective safety training and risk management programs are not developed overnight. But like it or not, golf course superintendents must consider the tasks of safety training and risk management as the highest priorities within their operations. Zero accidents should be the goal for the entire golf course staff. ■



A driving range accident waiting to happen

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