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PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A golf course superintendent's responsibilities as an owner's representative vary with each project. They depend on the construction contract and members of the owner's design team, such as the golf course architect and engineering and financial consultants who will work together to protect the owner's interests.

Golf projects often are defined less formally than vertical construction. It might not be your final responsibility to check the contractor's pay applications for math errors, for example, but there's nothing wrong with pointing out the ones you find. Overall, the team is responsible for the following tasks:

Assure the contractor's compliance with plans, specifications and the contract. This requires daily construction monitoring by knowledgeable people such as yourself.

Attend regular progress meetings. Clear communication always helps create a smoother-run project. Regular meetings can resolve small problems before they become bigger ones, which are more difficult to solve.

Approve acceptable work and materials. An owner must be reasonable and timely when determining acceptable work. Acceptance is conditional to later events. For example, a contractor will have to fix leaks in an irrigation system that develop after acceptance until the end of the guarantee period.

Note defective work to be corrected. This should be done in a consistent, firm and timely manner to reduce conflict.

Reject work and materials that don't comply or haven't been corrected. Rejecting work is serious and occasionally leads to contractor claims and lawsuits, so it shouldn't be taken lightly and should be done only if defective work isn't corrected. You'll want to do this as a team and

put it in writing, stating exactly why and what part of the work is rejected and offer the contractor a chance to fix the problem. Rejecting materials when delivered is a common occurrence.

Stop work when it's clear continuation won't yield satisfactory results. Stopping a portion of a contractor's work usually is a last resort because it might lead to a claim for a delay.

Direct the contractor to work within applicable laws written by/for ADA, OSHA and EPA, and provide a work safety plan. While this is a contractor's responsibility, courts sometimes rule failure of the owner to reasonably require contractor compliance might indicate complicity in wrongful acts.

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Monitor the project schedule. It's the contractor's responsibility to meet the schedule. When he falls behind, it's frustrating and costly because missing grassing by a month can set back a reopening an entire year, which has considerable revenue consequences. An owner has the right to demand corrective measures, but specifying exact measures might make an owner partially responsible for that schedule, leading to disagreements.

Coordinate, monitor, review and/or approve tests, samples, contractor provided designs and shop drawings as required in

the contract. Some items, such as greens mix, concrete strength, etc., can be determined to be satisfactory only through testing against specified standards. An owner will arrange to have these made or have the contractor conduct the tests and supply the results for the owner's review.

Interpret plans and specifications in conjunction with the golf course architect when given the authority to do so. In most cases, the golf course architect or irrigation designer will retain this duty, but in some areas they rely on the superintendent, especially when it might be a matter of preference as much as quality.

Resolve disputes and arrange solutions when problems arise. Document daily activities to create a project record. Make anything you write part of the official project record for all to see and make use of.

Review and approve payment applications by the contractor. Make sure they're paid for no more than the work that has been finished in case they leave the project before completion, but don't withholding funds unreasonably. With golf projects, estimating completed work is usually pretty straightforward. If there's mix on six of 18 greens, greens mix placement is 33-percent complete. It's rarely necessary to be more complicated.

As an owner's representative, you'll probably get involved in some trade-outs and negotiations. However, other than minor situations, you're not allowed to revoke, alter, enlarge or waive any of a contract's provisions, at least not without formalizing it and getting approval from the other parties.

The general rules to follow are:

- know what's in the contract;
- set a tone; and
- be consistent and timely.

Most construction disagreements and litigation result when projects begin informally and don't follow contract procedures closely. More next month. **GCI**