



Will OSHA Come A Knocking?

Probably not, but that doesn't mean it isn't concerned with what's going on under your maintenance facility's roof

BY LARRY AYLWARD, MANAGING EDITOR

If an inspector from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration shows up unexpectedly at Druid Hills GC in Atlanta, assistant superintendent David Rawlins won't run and hide behind the oak tree near the 17th green.

Rawlins will invite the OSHA inspector in, get him a cup of coffee and show him around. He's confident the OSHA inspector won't find any hazards at Druid Hills, except ponds and bunkers.

And Rawlins is sure the inspector will be pleased to see that

Druid Hills has an extensive written safety program, in addition to a formal training program that teaches employees to deal with potential hazards.

While Rawlins admits Druid Hills is probably more safety-conscious than other courses, he makes no apologies.

"We're really cautious about this," he says. "We're ready if OSHA comes."

But the question is: Will OSHA come? Probably not, Rawlins admits, unless there's a serious accident or fatality.

Continued on page 36

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Will OSHA Come A Knocking?

Continued from page 35

"I've been here 11 years, and I've never seen an OSHA inspector," he says.

That's because golf course maintenance facilities aren't high on OSHA's hit list, like the construction or manufacturing industries, says Sarah Bundschuh, an Atlanta-based safety consultant to the golf course industry.

While OSHA is authorized to set and enforce safety and health standards by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, the organization admits it can't regularly inspect the millions of workplaces it covers. But the workplaces with the

What to Expect From an OSHA Inspection

- To prepare for an inspection, OSHA compliance officers become familiar with the history of an establishment, the operations and the processes in use, as well as the standards most likely to apply.
- When an OSHA inspector arrives at a work site, he or she displays official credentials and asks to see the employer. Employers should always insist upon seeing compliance officers' U.S. Department of Labor credentials bearing their photos and serial numbers which can be verified by the nearest OSHA office. Employers have the right to require OSHA to obtain a warrant before permitting entry.
- The compliance officer will explain the nature of the visit, the scope of the inspection and the applicable standards. Information on how to obtain copies of the OSHA regulations will be furnished. A copy of any employee complaint will be provided. The employer will be asked to select an employer representative to accompany the compliance officer during the inspection.
- The compliance officer and the representative go through the workplace and inspect for workplace hazards. The compliance officer will discuss any apparent violations noted during the walkaround.
- The compliance officer reviews any apparent violations with the employer and discusses possible methods and time periods necessary for their correction. The compliance officer explains that these violations may result in a citation and a proposed financial penalty.
- OSHA is required by law to issue citations for violations of safety and health standards. The agency is not permitted to issue warnings.
- If an employer believes OSHA's citations are unreasonable or wishes to discuss the OSHA enforcement action, he or she may request an informal conference with the area director to discuss any citations issued. The agency and the employer may work out a settlement to resolve the dispute.



most hazardous situations receive OSHA's utmost attention.

Such places are work environments that pose "imminent dangers," or immediate hazards that could cause death or serious physical harm. OSHA will also investigate workplaces where catastrophes and fatal accidents have occurred. The administration will respond to written and signed complaints by current employees as well.

That's not to say OSHA isn't concerned with what's going on under your maintenance facility's roof. Bundschuh says she knows superintendents who were cited by OSHA for machine guarding, frayed extensions cords and equipment that should have been hardwired.

OSHA requires golf courses and other workplaces dealing with dangerous chemicals to implement the Hazard Communication Standard, a guideline that says employees have a need and a right to know the hazards and the identities of the chemicals they are exposed to when working. They also need to know what protective measures are available to prevent adverse effects from occurring, OSHA states.

A workplace where employees are exposed to hazardous chemicals must have a written plan that describes how the standard will be implemented in that facility, OSHA states.

The written program must reflect what employees are

Continued on page 38

DID YOU KNOW...

From back injuries to blazing-hot summers, you should be aware of work-place hazards

Back on the DL

So you threw out your back while renovating that decrepit bunker behind the 18th green. You're not alone in your pain.

Did you know that more than 1 million workers suffer back injuries each year, and that back injuries account for more than one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses? A 1993 Bureau of Labor Statistics survey revealed that 80 percent of the injuries were to the lower back and 75 percent happened while employees were lifting something.

OSHA suggests training employees to lift heavy items without putting a lot of stress on the lower back. It also suggests that golf course maintenance programs implement physical conditioning or stretching regimens among employees to reduce risk of muscle strain.

Bad gas

If you're a mechanic working in the garage and repairing mow-

Continued on page 38

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Will OSHA Come A Knocking?

Continued from page 37

doing in a particular environment. For example, the plan must list the chemicals at the site, indicate who's responsible for the various aspects of the program in that facility and where written materials will be made available to employees. The written program must describe how label requirements and other forms of warning, material safety data sheets, and employee information and training will be met in the facility.

Bundschuh, however, says the HCS is widely violated by golf courses and other industries. "(HCS) is not getting done to the point it needs to be getting done," she adds.

Bundschuh also advises superintendents to get up to date on the Respiratory Protection Standard, which was revised in 1998. If respirators are necessary, a golf course must establish and implement a written program with work-site-specific procedures, according to OSHA.

Golf courses should also be in line with OSHA's requirements for personal protective equipment, Bundschuh notes. If a personal protective equipment is to be used, a program should be initiated and maintained, OSHA states.

Bundschuh reports there are rumblings that workplaces may soon be required by OSHA to implement written safety programs for their operations — including golf courses. ■

DID YOU KNOW...

Continued from page 37

ers, watch out for that colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that can kill you — carbon monoxide.

Did you know that carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the most common industrial hazards?

Headaches, tightness across the chest, nausea, drowsiness, inattention and fatigue signal carbon monoxide poisoning. Severe poisoning can cause brain and heart damage, as well as have the potential to kill, according to OSHA. If you have a heart condition, carbon monoxide may aggravate your condition. If you smoke, you face a higher risk of carbon monoxide exposure.

Carbon monoxide, produced by the incomplete burning of carbon-containing material, has a variety of sources. A common source in the workplace — read: maintenance facility garages — is the internal combustion engine.

OSHA suggests installing an effective ventilation system in an area where carbon monoxide is prevalent, such as a maintenance facility's garage. The administration also suggests switching from fossil fuel-powered equipment to battery-powered machinery if possible.

Installation of carbon monoxide detectors in a maintenance facility would be a no-brainer.

Continued on page 40

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DID YOU KNOW...

Continued from page 38

An eye opener

Golf balls aren't the only items flying around the course. Flying particles, as in sand, dirt, fertilizer granules and grass clippings, float around the course constantly, just waiting to fly into your eye. Liquid pesticides and the mist they can create are also a threat to your eyes. That's why eye injuries are more likely on a golf course than in an office building.

Did you know that 70 percent of eye injuries result from flying or falling objects, and that 60 percent of the objects were smaller than a pin head?

OSHA reports that nearly 60 percent of eye injuries happen because employees aren't wearing eye protection. But get this: About 40 percent of those injured were wearing some form of eye protection — but it obviously wasn't good enough. Be sure to equip employees with protective eyeglasses with side shields — although even shields aren't a guarantee against injury.

OSHA recommends properly fitted eyewear that's suitable for the hazard encountered. Sounds basic, but remember that 94 percent of injuries to workers wearing eye protection resulted from objects or chemicals going around or under the protector, according to BLS. OSHA also suggests proper maintenance for eye-protection devices. Scratched and dirty devices reduce vision, cause glare and are accidents waiting to happen.

Long hot summer

If you work outside, you'll never forget last summer. You still haven't decided whether you were more tired of feeling the heat or people talking about it. They were both annoying.

But **did you know** that heat, as in torrid temperatures, can hurt you — badly?

So with spring here and summer around the corner, there are two things you can be assured of: Mark McGwire will slam at least 50 home runs and there will be at least a week's worth of days where the heat will seem unbearable.

However, you can take simple measures to prevent possible heat-related accidents. Drinking a lot of water and wearing light, loose-fitting clothes greatly reduces the risk of illness, according to OSHA.

Also, you may want to cut back on the coffee, caffeinated pop and tea, which contribute to dehydration. It's best to drink about one cup of cool water every 20 minutes whether you're thirsty or not, according to OSHA.

And employers: Don't work your employees like dogs when it's real hot. Let 'em take it easy until they adjust to the heat.

And if your best worker, Lyle, has a headache, flushed face, hot skin and has stopped sweating, you may want to sit him down and get him medical attention — pronto. Lyle may be experiencing a heat stroke.

— Larry Aylward (with a lot of help from OSHA)

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