

# Tips:

## Stopping Oil Leaks

You'll never see blades of grass covered in black goop and struggling for sunlight on the evening news the way you saw sea turtles or pelicans coated in the wake of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. But oil leaks from maintenance equipment can damage a superintendent's job security as easily as an oil tanker leak harms the environment.

Eric Kulaas, administrator of the online mechanics' discussion group *turftech.com* and shop foreman at the Renaissance Vinoy Resort GC in St. Petersburg, Fla., teamed with Scott Kane, technical services manager of the Fluid Connectors Group for Cleveland-based Parker Hannifin Corp., which manufactures hydraulic hoses and fittings, to provide superintendents with tips on how to stop oil leaks:

■ **Check hydraulic systems on a regular basis.**

Kane says people don't always realize that hydraulic hoses and fittings wear out, so regular inspections can prevent a worn hose from bursting. Kane suggests inspecting the hoses at least quarterly, although monthly inspections would be better.

■ **Find the true source of the leak.**

Most everyone assumes hydraulic leaks emanate from leaking hoses, but that's not always the case. But Kane says that if a leak occurs at a fitting and drips down the hose, it might look to a casual observer as if the hose is leaking. But if it's the fitting, repairing the hose won't solve the problem.

■ **Watch for unusual patterns of wear and tear.**

It's not enough to spot a worn hose and replace it, Kulaas says. Unless you figure out why the hose is worn, the new hose you install will wear in the same way. It may take more time to do a full system diagnostic, but you'll save yourself unnecessary costs in the long run.

■ **Replace worn parts with comparable equipment.**

It doesn't pay to rig up a hydraulic system with parts you found lying around the shop, Kane says. Each piece of equipment has specifications for servicing its hydraulic system that you should follow during repairs, he says. Attempting to replace worn equipment with non-specified parts could produce wear and tear that could lead to further — and possibly worse — leaks. Kane recommends that you find out what the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) rating is for your hoses and fittings before buying replacements. Match replacement parts accordingly.

■ **Get service training from a manufacturer's representative.**

Each manufacturer has different requirements for service, so make sure that you and your staff are trained by someone from the company that produced your equipment, Kane says.

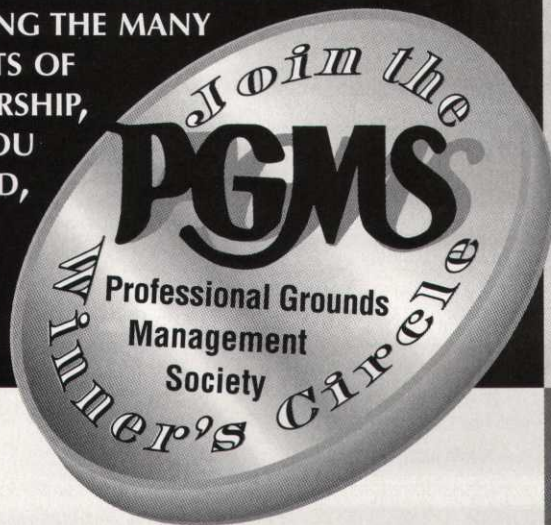
■ **Make sure the hoses are routed properly on equipment.**

Kulaas says he has seen situations where improperly installed hoses rubbed on sharp edges of the equipment. The sharp edges quickly wore down the hoses and leaks resulted. Periodic inspections will save you headaches in the end, he adds.

Kulaas says proper inspections of hydraulic systems can prevent small leaks from getting worse — saving time, money and headaches for superintendents.

"Get to know your machines intimately so that the slightest problem will immediately jump to your attention," Kulaas says. "The better you know the machine, the more easily you'll be able to spot something before it becomes a major leak on the 18th green."

PROFESSIONAL GROUNDS MANAGEMENT SOCIETY MEMBERS ARE ALREADY ENJOYING THE MANY BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP, AND YOU SHOULD, TOO:



Mail to:  
**PGMS**  
120 Cockeysville Rd, Suite #104 • Hunt Valley, MD 21030  
Phone: 410-584-9754 • Fax: 410-584-9756

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Internet/E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

- Local branch meetings
- Bi-monthly newsletter
- Membership card and certificate, entitling you to discounts on rental cars, books and videos
- Certified Grounds Manager and Groundskeeper Certification programs
- Training manuals
- Membership directory
- Information clearinghouse
- Customized list of courses offered by ICS Learning Systems, the nation's leader in distance education
- Annual conference and Green Industry Expo

### *Isn't it about time you joined us?*

Members nationwide agree: **PGMS** is the greatest professional networking opportunity for grounds professionals.

### *What are you waiting for?*

For more information about beginning your membership, call us at **410-584-9754**, or fill out the form to the left and mail today. You'll be glad you did!