

Terrorist attacks ravaged our country last year, and the omnipresent threat continues. Therefore, it's time to examine how secure your supplies are at your course.

After all, you certainly wouldn't want to become an unwitting accomplice to a tragedy. Let's start with a few questions.

How accessible is your maintenance area? Is it fenced in? Do you have an alarm system? Does a night watchman make rounds at your club facility? How secure is your diesel pump? Do you have a pallet of ammonium nitrate in your fertilizer storage area? Do you keep a large inventory of pesticides on hand?

Until now, I never considered golf course maintenance as a potential source for weapons of mass destruction, unless you counted weeds, fungal spores, nematodes or sod webworms as victims. On Sept. 11, 2001, however, a handful of misguided fanatics changed the way we must look at our daily routines.

We are being asked to be vigilant and protective of our fertilizer and pesticide stocks, often at maintenance facilities that were afterthoughts in the design and construction of our golf courses. We are asked to track the ordering and delivery of these products, and to report any overdue shipments. We are also asked to report any suspicious activity relating to these products — whatever that means.

We have known for some time that ammonium nitrate and diesel fuel can be combined to create a lethal truck bomb, but even the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center and the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City did not push us over the edge like the terrorist acts last September. Our good-natured, trusting and our often taken-for-granted attitudes toward freedom of choice, training, education and commerce were rudely rubbed in our faces. A new way of looking at our daily routines emerged out of necessity.

What can you do as citizen soldiers in the war on terrorism? Don't keep excessive inventories of fertilizers or pesticides. The products you do need to keep around should be stored in locked, secure locations. If your mainte-

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nance compound isn't fenced, do it. Install an alarm system to deter intruders. Fueling stations also need to be as secure as possible so diesel fuel cannot be extracted easily.

I know this may sound like overreacting, but you should still go through the exercise of examining your safety precautions. You must ensure your course is doing its part to prevent access to everyday materials that can be converted to perverted uses against our people.

We shouldn't get paranoid, but we should be prepared. I still go to the mailbox every day without wearing rubber gloves to get my bundle of bills, junk mail and magazines, but I also wash my hands more often after handling the mail.

You might consider how you can alter your fertility program to avoid using high-nitrate fertilizers as often as before. In addition, you might order less of the products and apply them more often instead of keeping two or three applications on hand.

You should check with your state's agriculture department and make sure you have a hotline number posted so you can notify a law-enforcement division or the FBI of any irregularities in shipping and delivery or any incidents of tampering, theft or break-in.

After taking the physical security measures needed to make your supplies safer from theft and considering operational changes to your programs, the hardest challenge of all will be acknowledging that our way of life may be under attack for some time.

Our profession has evolved and survived for more than 200 years. This is just one more challenge we must face so we can do our part in the campaign for enduring freedom.

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