

**T**he other day my boss came up to me and said, "Jim, the company has decided to embark on a safety campaign. We would like you to keep an eye out for signs of potentially hazardous conditions on the golf course involving the crew and give us a full report."

Filled with enthusiasm for this important assignment, I jumped into my golf car and sped off in search of signs of safety hazards, left foot dangling out the side.

It was a beautiful sunny day, and the course was packed with golfers. Interspersed among the play, the crew was dutifully going about its assignments mowing fairways, raking bunkers, string trimming and edging cart paths.

I took my time touring the entire course, making sure I didn't miss any opportunity to note hazardous conditions and situations that needed to be corrected. What I saw was quite surprising, as I didn't really expect to find so many unsafe situations involving the crew.

Armed with lots of gathered safe-practices information, I sped back to the maintenance barn and, entering the second bay at high speed, locked my brakes and power slid to a halt just inches shy of the flammables cabinet.

I leapt from the car over the puddle of spilled hydraulic fluid, made my way past the mechanic who was grinding a weld with his safety glasses set firmly on the workbench, and headed for my computer to file the following safety report.

## Dear Public Golf Course Owner and Operator,

After touring the golf course in search of potential safety hazards, I've compiled a list of these hazards for your review. I think we should all work diligently to resolve these issues so as to maintain safe conditions on the course wherever possible.

**Hazard one:** Steve the irrigation guy was working on a fairway head on No. 1 and was unaware there was a group on the tee. The group also failed to warn him they were teeing off. They shrugged their shoulders and hit away, the third player's shot hitting the fender of Steve's cart. The ball careened off the plastic and whizzed past his left ear on its way out of bounds.

# Better Safe Than Sorry Applies Here

BY JIM BLACK



HEY, WAIT A MINUTE,

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The hazard was created when the golfers failed to warn Steve they were hitting so he could move out of harm's way.

**Solution:** Ask the golfers to have respect for the crew. I asked that golfer if he would have hit away if Steve had been a player instead of on the crew and he answered, "No way." Hey, wait a minute, aren't people people? If a golfer wouldn't hit into another golfer, why would he hit into the crew?

**Hazard two:** As Jose was mowing fairways, he pulled over his mower to the rough to let a group play through. Jose throttled the mower's engine down and cut it off. A player had hit his tee shot near where Jose had parked. When he topped his approach shot and advanced it about 20 feet closer to the green, he immediately looked at Jose and began swearing at him and shaking his club at him as if it were Jose's fault.

**Solution:** More lessons, less beer.

**Hazard three:** Sidney Sidewinder, our local wannabe golf course architect, planted the 16th green precariously at the edge of a 50-foot ravine. I've watched in horror on many occasions as mowing equipment, along with its respective operators, disappeared over the edge into the abyss. There seems to be no safe way for the crew to be able to mow this type of contrived green complex.

**Solution:** Ask architects to think a little beyond their self-made monuments to the people who will actually maintain them.

In conclusion, I must say it would seem that aside from the usual, obvious safety precautions like eye and ear protection and proper equipment operation training, there are many other safety issues that could be addressed — some of which begin on the first tee.

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