



“The EMS framework makes sense for golf operations by helping to identify all aspects of your facility’s environmental impact.”

DAVID SMALLWOOD

DIRECTOR OF AGRONOMY, KAPALUA GOLF (HI)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The EMS edition

BY KEVIN A. FLETCHER, PH.D.

Environmental improvements made throughout golf since the early 1990s have been noteworthy. The Environmental Institute for Golf’s 2007 *Environmental Profile Survey*, and their subsequent surveys since, have revealed numerous areas where golf has embraced environmental stewardship as a way to conduct business — from spill prevention to Integrated Pest Management practices.

Yet the industry has lacked a truly comprehensive approach to address facility-wide (i.e., not just the golf course) regulatory compliance, risk management, liability containment and improvements in best management practice adoption.

Enter the Environmental Management System framework. For over a decade, more sophisticated Environmental Management Systems (EMS) have been providing businesses of all shapes and sizes the type of credible and effective approach to managing environmental impacts and opportunities that the regu-

latory community and environmental organizations alike expect. The most-widely adopted type of EMS is the internationally-recognized ISO 14001 EMS standard (see sidebar, page 32) first introduced for worldwide use in 1996. This management standard is based on a “Plan/Do/Check/Act” approach to handling environmental expectations, obligations and aspirations and built to provide organizations a clear path to environmental excellence.

The ISO 14001 Environmental Management System standard provides a number of advantages for golf course owners

and operations — namely, it is established, proven, “ready-to-use” and already widely accepted. It is globally pervasive (in use in over 140 countries) and has already been adopted by hundreds of thousands of organizations, including businesses, governments, schools and nonprofits alike.

In other words, since it is consensus-based, transparent in its development and already internationally recognized, the ISO 14001 EMS framework is ready to work for golf with no further caveats.

An EMS specific for golf

The e-par Environmental Management System for Golf is an online platform that allows anyone with knowledge of operations to develop an ISO 14001-compliant EMS for the golf course, clubhouse and pro shop. Initially developed in Australia over a decade ago and now in use in over two dozen countries, the e-par EMS was brought to the U.S. about two years ago.

The e-par EMS platform is “live” and has

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been “in-use” in the field for over a year now. So, what has been learned so far about the value Environmental Management Systems in general, and the e-par EMS for Golf, specifically? Are the benefits that other business sectors have experienced from EMS adoption also being experienced by golf professionals? We picked a handful of potential EMS benefits and asked e-par EMS for Golf members to respond.

CAN IT HELP TO EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY MANAGE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

“The EMS framework makes sense for golf operations by helping to identify all aspects of your facility’s environmental impact. It made a lot of sense for us to

adopt the program at Kapalua because we are such a large facility that has many moving parts. E-par’s EMS specifically enabled us to identify all of our potential environmental risks and map out plans of how we could proactively manage our interaction with the environment.”

DAVID SMALLWOOD
*Director of Agronomy
Kapalua (Hawaii) Golf*

CAN IT HELP MEET GROWING INDUSTRY STANDARDS?

“This is a huge step in the process to help keep the game of



Pete Grass

golf moving forward in its sustainability and environmental efforts. Being proactive rather than reactive will

KEY ELEMENTS OF AN EMS

Environmental policy and principles	EMS documentation
Legal and other obligations	Operational control (i.e., standard operating procedures)
Identification of environmental aspects and impacts	Emergency preparedness and response
Environmental management plan with objectives and targets	Monitoring and measuring
Structure and responsibilities	Nonconformance and corrective action, records
Training and staff awareness, communications, outreach	EMS audit
	Management review

serve us well with our membership, allied associations, the golf world and maybe most importantly, with those who are the detractors of the game, question its effect on the environment, and question if we are responsible stewards of the lands we manage.”

PETE GRASS, CGCS
Hilands GC, Billings, Mont.

CAN IT HELP TO MEET EXPECTATIONS OF THE REGULATORY COMMUNITY?

“If I am talking with Department of Environmental Conservation, insurance representatives, or government officials, I speak mostly about e-par and our Environmental Management System.”

MATT CEPLO, CGCS
Rockland CC, Sparkill, N.Y.

CAN IT HELP MEET COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS?

“We’re surrounded by homes, with an older development and a newer one. The people in the older development decided that they should be concerned about the rural water supply and the quality of the water. They were concerned about their wells. I was able to use the EMS to demonstrate that we are taking responsibility and had documented our strengths and weaknesses for water best management practices. I also mentioned to the local residents that the EMS met the ISO 14001 standard. While most people don’t know what that really is specifically, it gave us some real

legitimacy that our environmental management approach wasn’t just pulled out of thin air, that it was based on an internationally-recognized standard.”

ERIC FOERSTER, GCGS, MG
Ironbridge GC, Glenwood Springs, Colo.

DOES AN EMS HELP TO TRACK AND REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE GOALS?

“The process of building the EMS really opened my eyes up to the tracking and documentation we really should be doing, and the EMS provides the platform to do that more efficiently. It still takes some time to keep up with it, but it’s a lot better than doing it ‘hit or miss’ like before.”

ERIC FOERSTER

DOES AN EMS HELP TO REDUCE AND MANAGE ENVIRONMENTAL RISK?

“I look at an EMS as an insurance program with benefits. No one ever wants to have to use their insurance because that means there has been an accident, but when something does happen you’re sure glad it’s there.”

ADAM IKAMAS, CGCS
*Michigan GCSAA
Executive Director*

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