



The Self Audit

By Michael Semler

A fellow golf course superintendent of ours related this story to me. He told how for years he wondered what would happen if OSHA would stop in and inspect his maintenance facility for hazards to employees. He stopped wondering, and asked the state OSHA office to come over and make an informal inspection. They gladly obliged.

My first response to such an invitation was that my friend was losing his mind. He was inviting someone over to find all the problems with his facility and possibly exposing his club to some hefty expenses to repair any of the infractions. However, after some further thought, I retracted my statement and praised my colleague for such honorable intuition. Instead of waiting for a possible disaster, he was taking control of the situation and was going to protect himself and his employer from possible damages.

As it turns out, the inspection turned up only a few minor infractions, which were easily repaired with only a minimal cost to the club. This superintendent is now sleeping more comfortably knowing at least one aspect of his operation is free of any problems or risks.

I relate this story to you not to make a sales pitch for OSHA—they certainly don't need that—and I would not make this type of recommendation to any superintendent without some thought

and planning on his or her part. I relate his story to make a larger pitch to our industry as a whole. That pitch is the value of the Self Audit put out by GCSAA Compliance Assistance Program (CAP). The first time I heard about CAP, my immediate response was that the world had gone mad. It has always been easier to keep your mouth shut in hopes of being ignored or overlooked by the laws that govern our operations. I thought the GCSAA was really going to open a can of worms and expose all of our faults to all of the governing bodies.

I finally realized, however, how wrong I was and what an excellent idea CAP was. And here is why.

CAP provides a comprehensive self audit that golf course superintendents perform on their maintenance facilities. An extensive list of questions is answered by the superintendent about his or her golf course. These questions relate to compliance with state and federal laws and potential risks that may be present at the facility. Not much is overlooked. These answers are then sent to the environmental auditing firm of Hall-Kimbrell. They evaluate the responses based upon state and federal laws and make a specific response report for the superintendent concerning that facility.

This report is about your facility only, and no one else's. It is not a stan-

dard question and answer sheet. The report provides detailed and invaluable information about potential risks around your golf course, and what you can do to avoid problems with the law.

Now, some of you may question the reliability of such an audit or evaluation. Lets clear the air right now. The audit is not meant to take the place of state and federal regulating agencies, like OSHA or the EPA, which enforce and regulate laws concerning our operations. It is meant to make the superintendent aware of potential problems and risks that may be present at the golf course, and then make recommendations on practices and procedures that can be implemented to reduce or avoid these risks in the future.

I know some may flinch at the cost of having an environmental audit done for the golf course. I still am. But we are all becoming aware of the explosion of federal and state regulations that superintendents must be aware of and comply with. It seems we can never remain on top of them without some outside help. Maybe what we need is the help of the GCSAA Compliance Assistance Program in conjunction with Hall-Kimbrell. It seems a small price to pay to learn more about the status of your maintenance facility and its operations.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This audit will not protect you in a court of law, and it does not provide a shield of protection against state and federal laws if you are involved with a court case. It is one avenue of golf course information superintendents may look to for help in maintaining a legal golf course operation. For specific advice, contact your business attorney.

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