

The First WGCSA Meeting of 1991 Brings More on Environmental Issues

By Tom Schwab

The Spring Business and Educational Meeting of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association was held on March 18th in Fond du Lac. Three regulation packed talks filled the morning educational session. The theme for the morning session was, "Compliance with the Laws."

We, in the golf industry, are being seen more as keepers of the environment. It is imperative that we stay abreast of these ever-changing laws which are being instituted to protect that environment and ourselves.

The morning's first speaker was Deborah Epps of the Wisconsin Department of Emergency Government. She spoke about the community "right to know" law under SARA (Superfund Amendment Reauthorization Act). This law requires that anyone who uses, stores or manufactures a hazardous material in excess of specified weight limits must report them on a "State Tier Two Emergency & Hazardous Chemical Inventory" form.

This is intended to inform your local fire department and community about any potential hazards they could encounter should you have a fire or spill. A short list of some materials that could be found on your golf course along with the threshold amount one may have at any one time is as follows: Chlorine gas - 100 pounds, Gasoline - 1500 gallons, Golf Cart Batteries - 200 batteries.

There are not many other materials we use on the golf course that exceed the level where they have to be reported under SARA. For a more complete list you should contact Deborah Epps at (608) 266-1509. Although there is only a small list of materials we are required to report, if we happen to have one material and it spills or burns, and we have not filed a Tier Two form, she warns that we will definitely be referred for prosecution. It's also just the right thing to do to protect your community and emergency personnel.

Dr. David Kammel, an assistant professor from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Agricultural Engineering Department, gave the second lecture. His subject was pesticide storage and handling facilities. Basically, the law says you need a handling facility

in two cases: (1) If you do your mixing and loading within 100 feet of a well or body of water or (2) If you are farther than 100 feet from a well or body of water but you mix and load more than 1500 pounds of active ingredients annually. David told us about a variance farmers get that allows them to mix and load in or adjacent to their field which is the whole farm. He thought for superintendents each green, tee and fairway is considered a separate field. In other words, he thought we can mix and load in the field if we mix just enough water and pesticide to do one green, tee or fairway then move on to the next one and do the same. However, Paul Morrison, Section Chief for Groundwater and Regulatory Services for Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protections, (608) 267-7726 said this is not the case. He said the law says we on the golf course can mix and load more than 1500 pounds of active ingredients in the field annually. The criteria is that we must have two mixing and loading sites. Each must be 100 feet away from a well or body of water, less than 1500 active ingredients annually, and at least 1/2 mile away from the other mixing site.

Let's get real, though. If you can afford that much pesticide, you can afford a facility. Even if you use much less, a facility is a good way to protect you, your employees and the golf course.

Kammel's facilities are comprehensive and take everything into account. They have a heated and ventilated storage building, a secondary containment or curb and dike system, a mixing/handling area, a loading/washpad

area, and a worker safety area with fire extinguishers, shower, spill response kit, and personal protection kit. He said he is hoping to build a facility specifically designed for the golf course for us to observe. If you would like his plan or have any questions please call him at (608) 262-9776.

The final talk was from Sheldon Schall, a staff person from the Fire Protection Section of DILHR (Department of Industry, Labor & Human Relations). He told us about, "everything you ever wanted to know about underground and aboveground gas storage tanks but were afraid to ask". Concerning underground tanks, he addressed various leak detection and spill overfill requirements. He also touched on corrosion protection of underground tanks. Since most superintendents are beginning to use aboveground tanks there was much interest in the next part of the talk. He seemed to recommend removal of the old underground tanks over closure in place. That decision can be based on a personal preference until May 1, 1991, when new laws take effect. After that time underground tanks must be removed when switching to aboveground. On aboveground tanks, his talk covered containment capacity, containment valves, crash protection around tanks, set back from buildings and property lines, security, overfill protection, and plan approval. If you have any questions on the new laws after May 1, underground tank leak contamination insurance (Pecfa), or any other storage tank questions call Sheldon Schall at (608) 266-0956.

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