

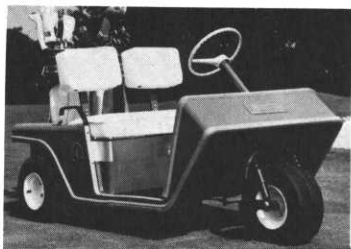
# HOW MANAGERS DEAL WITH TENSION

All organizations experience times when, because of external or internal pressures, members of the organization become tense. As tension increases, the likelihood of conflicts among employees and between employees and managers increases. As a manager, you should be aware when stressful circumstances are developing and what actions you should take to defuse a potentially explosive situation.

First, remember that people under pressure may not be objective. They become overly sensitive to real or imagined slights and find it difficult to retain perspective. For this reason, it is virtually impossible to resolve a problem under tension-producing conditions, particularly if you are feeling tense yourself.

There are two techniques, used singly or together, which will help cool down tempers and promote a quiet, intelligent approach to a problem.

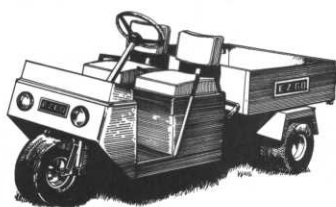
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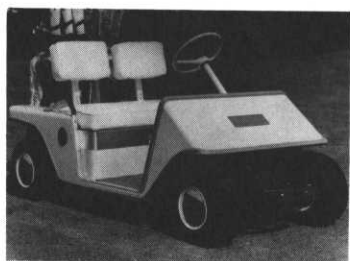
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**SALES-SERVICE-LEASING-PARTS**

First, change the place of your discussion. If the problem involves a location or object that caused the stressful situation, like a broken piece of machinery or a patch of damaged turf, having the evidence there will only serve to perpetuate the crisis.

If you have a private office or another place where you will not be interrupted, use it. Trying to resolve a problem with a crowd of onlookers is asking for trouble. It may also be that the problem is of a confidential nature, making an employee reluctant to discuss it fully where he may be overheard.

A cooling off period is another good move toward peaceful resolution of a stressful situation. If an employee or manager has reacted emotionally to a situation, it may only take a few hours for him to see his error and be ready to act reasonably again.

Before the time comes for a discussion, analyze what caused the stress. By pinpointing the cause for the stress, the emotional reaction that "everything's going wrong" will be cut down to size; you'll be able to say, "Situation or person X is causing the problem - let's deal with X".

Seek a resolution of the problem that allows everyone involved to retain his dignity. Nothing is accomplished by humiliating an employee, and may only cause further deterioration of an already unsatisfactory situation. If an apology on your part is appropriate, by all means offer one. It is one of the best ways to demonstrate your concern

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and desire to be fair. At no time is the ability to listen more important. Interrupting or outshouting an already upset employee can only make things worse.

In a well-managed organization, stressful situations with employees arise only occasionally. How they are handled when they do arise can make the difference between an unhappy, divisive bunch of workers and a satisfied group of employees who respect both you and themselves.

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### DON'T GET THOSE "BROWN BAG BLUES"

Certain foods, including many that are popular for bag lunches, are highly susceptible to spoilage if left for several hours at room temperature.

If refrigeration facilities are not available for your employees who carry their lunches to work, strongly urge them to bring non-perishable lunches, such as cheese, peanut butter, hard-boiled eggs, etc.

Potato salad, meat and meat salad are particularly good hosts for bacteria.

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