

Slow Down Think Smart!

By Brian Lein
Assistant Superintendent/Mechanic
Rich Acres Golf Course, Richfield

Most personal injuries that happen at a workplace could have been prevented if the person would have slowed down and thought about the job he or she was doing.

All of us have been in situations where limited time has put pressures on us to finish projects in a hurry. Sometimes we choose what we think is the fastest route without giving full consideration to safety procedures. Many times things go without mishap; on other occasions we aren't as lucky.

This brings to mind a situation in which a person was changing a drive belt on a pressure washer. He was in a hurry to get it done so that it could be used right away. He did not loosen the belt adjustment. He figured all he had to do was put the belt on as far as it would go, then hold it in place as he turned on the switch and walked the belt right on to the pulley.

This method often works, but in this case the man got his thumb caught between the pulley and the belt. As a result, he now is missing half of his thumb.

The job of installing a drive belt on a pressure washer the correct way probably would have taken only 10 minutes. I'm sure this person wishes he would have taken the time to do the job the safe way. This is just one example of a person who chose a short-cut, but, in the end, the job resulted in personal injury and time lost.

I acknowledge that short cuts do work on some jobs, but there are several things we should think of first. Perhaps you can do the job the quick way and not get injured, but does the co-worker watching have the experience to do it without taking safety precautions? We must emphasize that they should work smart and safely.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when training someone to operate golf course equipment.

Did I show them the safety instructions and operator's manual?

- Did they fully understand it?
- Are all of the equipment's built-in safety devices in proper working order?
Safety devices should be checked regularly.

If you have any older equipment that has had its safety switches by-passed for any reason, you should have them reconnected. If, for any reason, an injury should occur due to the by-pass, the employer and possibly the mechanic working on the equipment could be held liable.

Keeping your equipment safe may cost you some money up front, but, in the long run, you save time and money.

Mechanics should remember a few safety warnings when working on course equipment. One task I see performed wrong a lot is jump starting with a booster battery. **This is the proper way** to jump start a vehicle with a booster battery.

- 1) Set parking brake and put transmission in neutral. Turn off lights and other electrical loads.
- 2) Attach one end of one jumper cable to the positive terminal of the booster battery and the other end to the positive terminal of the discharged battery.
- 3) Attach one end of the remaining cable to the negative terminal of the booster battery and the other end to a good ground on the frame of the vehicle away from the discharged battery. Be careful not to cause sparks.
- 4) Reverse this sequence exactly when removing the jumper cables.

The reason for following this procedure is to prevent sparks near the battery, which provides hydrogen gas that can be explosive. Always disconnect the battery before doing any maintenance work.

A good idea for golf course personnel is to have a "3 X 5" card in file with all emergency medical information for each employee.

Each card should include:


- The employee's doctor's name, clinic address and phone number;
- A list of three or four family members, their home and work telephone numbers, insurance company with identification numbers and medical plan.
- Any medications the employee is taking.

This may sound like digging into an employee's privacy, but it may save his or her life.

An emergency eye wash station is a safety precaution that I would recommend for every maintenance shop. The cost of an eye station is around \$275.00. Most safety data sheets recommend that, if a product gets in your eyes, you should flush the eye in water for 15 minutes and get medical attention immediately.


The eye wash station does a more complete job of flushing the eyes, compared with flushing them at a sink.

Take a look at your safety procedures and policies to see if they need to be updated. You might even want to set up a safety awareness program for new employees. The main thing, however, is to *slow down and think* about the job you're doing.

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