

# Balancing The Scales On Rules, Regulations & Movements

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The pendulum swings left, then right, and we can't seem to get it in the middle. What we need is balance.

Our society has been changed by a plethora of rules, regulations and movements, such as the Americans and Disabilities Act (ADA), the Women's Movement, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), the Civil Rights Act, Social Security, Welfare, environmental and management regulations, etc. All of these started for good reasons and have changed attitudes in our society and helped people. However, they all seem to go too far. These movements are like powerful freight trains that get rolling so fast they can't be stopped. Why can't we keep them under control?

Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent retrofitting old buildings and constructing new ones so they are more accessible to the disabled. There are grumblings about the costs, but some have been worth it. The Women's Movement has helped to advance women in business and politics. OSHA has definitely helped to make America's workplaces safer, and the Civil Rights Act did help to "jump start" American attitudes toward minorities. Social Security can act as a "safety net" for America's most needy, Welfare can help the unfortunate "get back on their own feet," and "properly" protecting the earth's resources is worth having "some" environmental regulations.

## The "Other Side"

But this is a coin that has an "other side" that is much bigger than the front and defeats its intended purpose. Bureaucracies are built, movements get going and before you know it, the regulations are doing more to pay for the bureaucracies than to help people. The wrong people are helped due to inept implementation, and even though the basic goals have been accomplished, the movements continue to keep a few of the outspoken in the limelight. We go too far. Why can't we get it right?

## The Golf Industry Cares

People get so aggravated with the regulations they want to eliminate them. That will not happen, and it isn't the answer. Balance is the answer.

Take golf and the environment, for example. The golf industry has been falsely accused of being filled with rich elitists who could care less about the environment, and there has been a lot of overreaction to environment, and there has been a lot of overreaction to environmental issues. But, some of this has done some good. Today's golf course superintendents have better chemicals, fertilizers, biological controls and knowledge of helpful cultural practices than were available 20 years ago. There is no doubt we are now able to properly maintain turf in a safer, more environmentally friendly manner than ever before — not because superintendents' attitudes have changed, but their knowledge base and the tools available to them have. I contend that superintendents always cared about the environment, but a lot of our new tools and practices can be attributed to environmental pressure; no doubt about it.

The overreaction, however, keeps going to the point where people demand that no fertilizers or chemicals ever be used, or they want no golf courses at all. They forget it is green space and much better than the 100% runoff caused by a new "mega mall," which would most likely be met with cheers and little opposition.

Why can't we get it somewhere in the middle? Rules and regulations are necessary to make people do things for the good of all that they would not do independently. That does not mean we should keep going until we regulate businesses to death. We need to pursue the serious infractions and leave the minor ones alone. We need balance.

## *Professionalism*

In the strictest terms, a profession is an avowed occupation. Professionalism then becomes an attitude about that occupation. It is a portrayal of your personal integrity regarding the work that you do for pay. Business practices, communications, continuing education, discipline, ethics, environmental stewardship, image, personal conduct, professional association participation, regulatory compliance, turf management and training are all areas of our occupation that should be executed with the highest professional standards. They are the benchmarks by which we, as individuals, and our profession are measured.

— Joel D. Jackson, CGCS