

The Service Department

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY

Take pride in your equipment and tools. Keep them very sharp and balanced, well lubricated, even over lubricated if possible, and you will save power and therefore fuel. We all love to save money!

When pruning trees, shrubs, or flowers, it is quite noticeable when the proper tools are used. When they are very sharp and in good condition, the job is much easier. This is the same for turf grass equipment. A well-maintained yard, golf course, green, or ball park is a delight to see, so keep your equipment clean and sharp.

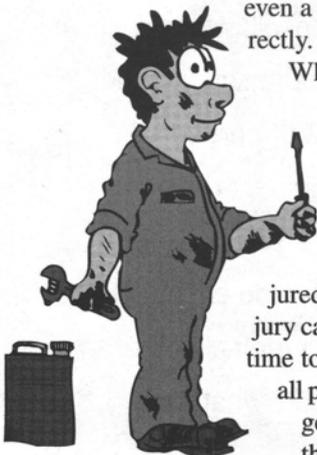
Due to humidity, rain, and plant moisture, rust will progress constantly. We can only overcome this process with thorough maintenance. Naturally, all machinery will perform much better without rust.

On the safety side, do not let anyone use a machine without proper training. Eli Luster advises reading the operator's manual before working on equipment. Procedures and performance schedules have been tested under actual operating conditions and have proven that it's worth both the time and effort needed to perform them. *If you put off reading the manual, you'll likely need it later to see what should have been done, or what must be redone.*

Use the right part. The proper type and size part and the proper hardware allow the part to do the job for which it was intended. Don't make substitutions. Hardware used in power equipment is chosen for a purpose. For example, the shear bolts (soft, break-away bolts) frequently used to attach accessories, will break away when an object becomes lodged, freeing the attachment from the gear box or drive shaft. If a hard bolt is substituted, the accessory remains attached even when an object becomes trapped, forcing the unit to continue operating and transferring the stress and damage to a more expensive part of the machine.

Little things do count. Even simple parts, like belts, must fit correctly. Contrary to popular belief, "will-fit" parts may not be the same as original equipment parts. If a belt is worn or too small, there will be belt slippage, reducing the effective operation of the machine. Worn or wrong-sized belts can cause wear that changes the physical shape of the sheave. If this occurs, even a new, properly-sized belt won't fit correctly.

While keeping your equipment in good repair, pay very close attention to the safety equipment found on all machines. Do not tie off or jump safety switches or levers. They are there to help keep operators from getting on the list of people that have been injured or even died while on the job. An injury caused by a machine usually takes a long time to heal. Make sure shields are covering all power takeoffs. They are extremely dangerous, especially when children are in the vicinity.



Remember to keep fuels properly mixed and stored in marked and clean containers. Many experienced workers have installed the wrong fuels in gas, mixed gas, or diesel engines. Check air pressure in the tires and oil in the engine.

The first thing you do when you begin your day and the last task you perform at the end of the day is to circle check your equipment. This will save you money and give you pride in your machinery. You will be pleased with the many problem-free hours you will experience due to good maintenance. Have a great summer! ♦

— Allan Gray (with help from Eli Luster)

Eli Luster's passages from "Equipment Maintenance for Sports Turf Managers," Turf and Landscape Press, March 1995 as reprinted in Sports Turf Topics: A Compendium of STMA Articles, 1995-1996.



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