



OTS HIGHLIGHT
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Circle Checks Are Not Just For Your Equipment

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Parks and open space job positions today require demonstrated competency, independence and knowledge as well as the ability to perform routine assignments and tasks. The old way of hiring and releasing workers into the work-force hoping they knew their stuff is no longer considered acceptable. Today's parks and open space professionals must build set training objectives into their hiring and staff preparation process. Operations that either rehire experienced seasonal workers from year to year or that believe a worker with a certification in their résumé requires no additional training, are at risk of legal accountability.

The first test is the competency of those who are conducting the hiring. Are they well informed and knowledgeable regarding the employer's legislative workplace obligations? Have they remained current and up-to-date by actively attending professional development courses, reading industry related publications and staying in tune with advancing techniques and technologies?

If you are conducting business the same today as you were 5 years ago chances are that you have not stayed up-to-date. A common trap is the hiring job description. Too many operations set the job skill expectation level too high when hiring. Most fail to realize that when you ask for a variety of skill sets in the hopes of capturing the best candidate, you

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will need to provide training for the skills not arriving with the candidate or restrict their work until adequate training can be provided.

Management must set their required training objectives by reviewing what work

is to be conducted by each of their workers. For every expected task there must be an equal amount of training provided to help prove competency of the individual. For example, if the worker is expected to use a push mower, there must be sharing of written information and standard operating procedures followed by a demonstration by a competent person on what the shared information has stated. It is a simple 3-step approach: 1. Theoretical review – read it! 2. Practical review – do it! 3. Sign-off on it! If you have not completed all 3 steps then the worker should not be doing the work.

Begin by collecting all internal written policies and procedures as well as owner's manuals and operational videos. Then consider creating tests to confirm that the worker has read, viewed and understands the material. Now follow it up with an in-house hands-on training session. All workplaces must invest in comprehensive ongoing worker training. Training was once considered a nicety... it is now considered a necessity!