

Managing Stress of All Sorts

If there's an issue this time of year, it is stress. It is a stressful time of year for everyone in our business. First, we deal with turfgrass stresses. It is hot, and everyone knows what that means to the grass. But lest we forget that turf comes under stress at other times of the year, Scott Ebdon of the University of Massachusetts looks at winter stress. And upcoming issues of *Turfgrass Trends* will offer other views of turfgrass stress.

Stress on people & equipment

The second part of the job under stress is equipment. The season is about halfway through in the Northern areas. That means equipment has been stressed for a couple of months. Maintenance schedules might have been allowed to slip a bit to accommodate those extra working hours.

Best check with the shop and make sure everything is up to date. Better now to tighten a few belts or change the oil than have to deal with the stress of a major overhaul during a real crunch time.

If you and your staff are feeling stressed this time of year, that's normal. In fact, this piece might have increased your stress level as you thought about seeding and maintenance that needed to be done last week.

Keep in mind that most stress in humans is self-induced. Often, it is a lack of planning, or a need to adapt to changes in plans, that gives rise to stressed-out feelings.

Most stress is the result of managers feeling that their situation has gone out of control.

In fact, industrial psychologists say that most stress is the result of managers feeling that their situation has gone "out of control" and that other elements – perhaps a boss, the weather, staff resignations – are running things.

A simple to-do list can help. So can delegating authority and responsibility. Use others to help you manage the situation. Prioritize – realize that everything won't get done today (or even this season). Keep in mind that your sanity and serenity are keys to the staff working well.

If all else fails, grab that rusty iron from behind the pro shop and when nobody's looking, whack some balls into the distance. It's far better to relieve stress by running or pounding a pillow than it is to take it out on your employees or others.



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