



*Share a friendly wave when you encounter mowers while playing golf. These valuable employees are working hard to provide great playing conditions for you.*

## WHY DO MOWERS FOLLOW ME AROUND THE COURSE?

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**G**olf is the only sport where the field is being maintained while it is in play. As a result, we often see the maintenance staff during our round, especially fairway and rough mowers. While it can feel like mowers are following you around the course the reality is that they are doing their best to avoid interfering with play. A little background information will help you understand why we encounter mowers on the golf course, and why we should be glad they are out there.

Golf course superintendents and their teams work hard to produce and maintain attractive course conditions and good playability on a daily basis. Producing such conditions requires regular mowing. During the growing season, greens are mowed five to seven days per week, fairways are often mowed two to four times per week and roughs one or two times per week. While greens mowing is usually completed in advance of play, it is often not possible to mow 25-50 acres of fairways ahead of play. Moreover, mowing fairways when the grass is wet in the morning often produces significant clipping debris. Mowing when the

grass is dry in the afternoon yields a cleaner surface and better quality of cut.

If courses are mowing fairways two to four times per week and mowing rough once or twice per week, you are very likely to see fairway or rough mowers in operation if you are playing Monday through Friday. In the afternoon, mowing operations often work through the holes backward to avoid encountering a group of players for more than a hole or two. While employees mowing may stop while you are hitting a shot, they often don't turn off the mowers in order to avoid frequent starting and stopping and because the idling helps to cool the machines. They are doing their best to minimize any disruption to your round, but if mowers are nearby you may see or hear them working and [you may need to wait for a moment](#) while they move out of your way.

Golf course superintendents would much prefer to complete fairway and rough mowing ahead of play because mowing during play can be very inefficient. Unfortunately, fairway mowing often requires three to four units mowing for three to four hours to complete the process. Rough mowing often takes longer. Many courses simply don't have enough staff or mowing equipment to conduct all the necessary morning setup tasks – e.g., raking bunkers, changing holes, setting tee markers and mowing greens – and at the same time complete fairway or rough mowing operations.

Here are a few tips for when you encounter mowing operations on the course:

- Give 'em a break! Recognize that these employees are working hard to provide quality playing conditions for you to enjoy.
- Know the facts. Most golf courses do not have the staff or equipment to complete fairway or rough mowing ahead of play. Therefore, there is a high probability that you will see mowers on the golf course while you are playing.
- Make sure they see you. The mowers are loud and the operators often have ear protection on. It's very likely they won't hear when you yell "fore." Make sure the operator sees you and give them an opportunity to pull their mower out of the way before you hit in their direction.
- Say hello when you encounter someone mowing fairways or rough. Be friendly and share a wave or say thanks for their hard work – just as you would to someone helping you in a coffee shop or restaurant. The men and women that take care of your course will appreciate it!

The next time you see mowers in action while playing a round, know that they are completing an essential task that most often can't be completed ahead of play. Be safe, give them a wave of thanks and go on enjoying your round.