



Assigning staff to complete maintenance tasks independently is a great way to practice social distancing.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

BY JOHN DANIELS | AGRONOMIST, CENTRAL REGION

As the U.S. grapples with the spread of COVID-19, commonly known as the novel coronavirus, many golf courses have begun to adjust their operations to protect employees and golfers.

Limits on gatherings of 50 or more individuals and social distancing continues to be recommended by health and government officials as a way to slow the spread of the virus. Such considerations have resulted in cancellations of large events at golf facilities and even temporary closures of clubhouse bars and restaurants. Many food operations have been limited to carry-out or delivery orders only. Understanding the hardship created by extended dining closures, some golf facilities have allowed food service and hospitality staff members to temporarily shift to course maintenance operations. The ability to work outside independently – and away from close contact – on a variety of maintenance tasks has been a win-win for employees and employers.

At the Country Club of Detroit, golf course superintendent Ross Miller has implemented several prevention

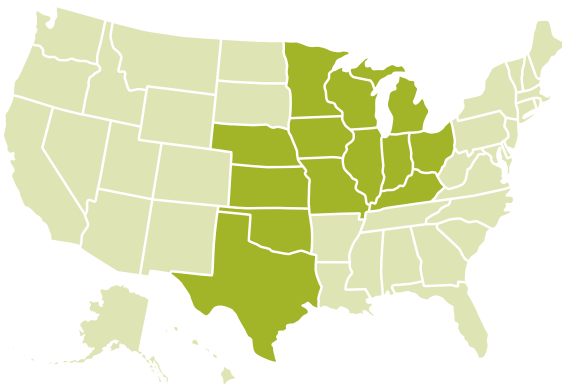
practices, like split work shifts, to limit employee interactions and thorough sanitization procedures for equipment after each use. Additionally, any employee that wants to take PTO or unpaid time away is free to do so. The golf course at the Country Club of Detroit is also going to be looking quite different for the time being. The course will continue to be open for play but there will be no golf carts, caddies, flagsticks, bunker rakes, or water stations in order to reduce close interactions and touchpoints. Golfers are still welcome to come out, get a little exercise and take in some fresh air while carrying their own bag. This type of outside-the-norm thinking is prudent during such unprecedented times.

The spread of COVID-19 is dynamic situation with frequent changes and updates. Keep monitoring directives from health and government officials so necessary adjustments can be made at your golf course. It is also important to communicate directly with all staff members regarding their specific roles and responsibilities in prevention planning.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

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