

Liability can take many considerations

Affirmative action, safety are important.

■ Robert Ochs, attorney for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, says affirmative action, as defined by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, should be a consideration of most superintendents.

"The act prohibits age, sex, religious or race discrimination in any form," says Ochs. "It requires a minimum of 50 employees and an 'effect on interstate commerce.' This means that if just one of your members is from out of state, it applies to you."



Ochs: best advice is to 'document, document, document.'

Having an affirmative action plan in place can do nothing but benefit your course, Ochs notes.

"If you do have an affirmative action plan, it sets you apart; if you don't, it can be used against you."

Affirmative action plans should be updated on at least an annual basis, he says.

The most important factor in proving yourself in court is an obvious attempt to satisfy the moral requirements set by law. Much of this is just common sense. But documenting your actions and making an attempt to recruit minority groups through local colleges will help.

"If you've given it the 'old college try,' you've satisfied the moral requirement," Ochs told GCSAA members at the organization's annual conference.

When it comes to this and other legal action that may be taken against you and/or your course, he says you should "document, document, document." He prefers handwritten notes to yourself that you can file away.

"They don't have to be fancy," Ochs admits. "Those handwritten notes are fabulous. They're great evidence in a court of law because they show the obvious intent for you to be a 'reasonable man.'"

"If you think something is significant,



Aerification can help break up soil layering and create a healthier putting surface.

Aerification practices for bentgrass greens

Many kinds of machines available for breaking up layers, Georgia expert says.

■ Aerification can alleviate the problems caused by layering on bentgrass greens, according to Dr. Bob Carrow of the University of Georgia.

"The presence of fine-textured layers on bentgrass greens causes the most problems," says Carrow, "although not all layers are bad. But once layering starts, it can become a snowballing effect. Even a very well-built USGA green can develop layers."

Wetting agent injections can help hydrophobic sands while aeration can help hard, compact coarse-textured sandy soils, Carrow claims.

One of the excellent machines to aerate away layers is the Toro Hydroject, which

uses high-pressure water. "It doesn't disturb the surface, it mixes any layers, and it can be done quite often," Carrow says. Though golf course superintendents can't topdress immediately after using a Hydroject, they can inject some liquids other than water—like wetting agents—with the machine.

Another deep aerifier is the Vertidrain, which penetrates up to 18 inches into the soil. "The Vertidrain doesn't distinguish between good and bad layers," says Carrow. "It will decrease rooting, but on bermudagrass the roots left will be much more viable. In the case of bentgrass, this effect becomes a negative."



Carrow: Aerate at least once a year for better results.

write it down. And even if you never use it, you're out nothing."

Another liability consideration is the safety of people on your course, both employees and golfers, he says.

You are always "under an obligation to act as a 'reasonable man.'" Which is nothing more than using common sense in everything you do relating to the safety of the course.

"Your insurance company is a valuable resource when it comes to liability risks," Ochs says.

Also, "posting is the cheapest form of insurance, and it's so easy to do."

—Jerry Roche

Deep drills like the Floyd McKay are good devices to use in both coarse and sandy soils, Carrow states. This spring, the company should have a new prototype for the golf course market ready. On the other hand, "turf conditioners" like the Yeager-Twose sub-aerifier, works better on fine-textured soils. The Yeager-Twose machine uses vibrating blades that can drop materials into slots in the soil.

"If I had a well-built USGA green, I'd still want to do at least one core aeration a year," Carrow concludes. "It's unusual not to build layers, and aerification is still very effective at breaking up those layers."

—Jerry Roche