



TEE TO GREEN



Shirley

Published by the
Metropolitan Golf Course
Superintendents Association

President's Message

Environmental Checklist

Is Your Operation Safe and Sound?

Welcome back from what was hopefully a relaxing—and productive—off-season. Probably one of the most productive off-season activities for me was attending the national convention. As always, the latest in equipment and maintenance products were on display, while the talks and seminars touched on hot topics affecting golf course superintendents—not the least of which was our responsibility to the environment.

The 1990s promises to be a challenging decade for all of us. With growing public concern over pesticide application, storage, and disposal; groundwater protection; water conservation; noise pollution; and worker safety, you can count on government regulations becoming increasingly restrictive.

But you can weather the storm of new rules and regulations by anticipating future restrictions and taking steps *now* to ensure your maintenance operation is environmentally safe and sound.

Here's a checklist I've assembled from reading and coursework. It includes questions we should be asking ourselves today to avoid legal tangles tomorrow. Many of them will be familiar to you. Some you may have already addressed. In either case, they bear repeating. If nothing else, they'll serve as confirmation that your practices are on course. *(continued on page 3)*

Special Feature

Addiction in the Workplace

How to Recognize—and Confront—a Substance Abuser On Your Staff

If you've noticed someone on your crew is less productive, has been out of work more than usual, or seems to be behaving uncharacteristically, the worst thing you can do is look the other way and hope the situation will improve. Chances are it won't.

In 65 to 70 percent of the cases where an employee has severe performance problems, substance abuse is the major cause. Statistics show, in fact, that one in five workers ages 18 to 25 have a drug or alcohol problem. And the consequences of doing nothing about these "troubled employees" are almost incomprehensibly severe.

According to data from the Department of Health and Human Services, substance abusers are:

- four times as likely to have accidents
- late to work more than three times as often as nonabusing employees
- forced to use three times the usual level of health benefits
- five times more likely to file a Workers' Compensation claim

But these numbers don't even begin

to dramatize the toll addiction takes on the individual sufferer. Nor do the statistics take into account the psychological effects an employee's addiction can have on the rest of your crew.

Though confronting an employee who you suspect has a drug or alcohol problem is never easy, there are compassionate—and legally defensible—measures you can take. Here's a step-by-step approach recommended by drug and alcohol treatment authorities Marilyn Graham and Drusilla Campbell in their book *Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace* (Facts on File, © 1988).

First Step: Documentation

The process begins with documentation of poor performance: too many late days, long lunches and coffee breaks, forgotten job assignments, excessive absences, or other behavior or personality changes that are impairing job performance. Generally, four to six weeks is sufficient time to observe and document this type of pattern.

There are many *(continued on page 4)*

Also in This Issue

- ② Spotlight on April Meeting Host Gregg Stanley
- ② Calling for Reid Award Nominations
- ④ How to Find Counseling for "Troubled" Employees

- ⑦ Upcoming Events and Meeting Schedule Updates

- ⑦ Congratulatory Notes

SPECIAL BINDER-READY INSERT: Forms for Handling "Troubled" Employees—Legally

Rockrimmon's Gregg Stanley Hosts the Season's First Golf Meeting

The 1992 golf season kicks off with the April 27 MetGCSA meeting at Rockrimmon Country Club in Stamford, CT. Hosting the event is the course's superintendent of three and a half years, Gregg Stanley.

Gregg modestly describes Rockrimmon as a "reasonable, membership-type golf course with greens at a conservative speed." But those who have played it tout it as a meticulously manicured playing field with beautifully maintained flower gardens and plantings.

Around since the 1940s, the course's front nine was designed by famed Golf Course Architect Robert Trent Jones Sr. A decade later, the back nine was completed by a second architect, Orrin Smith, who according to Gregg, did a masterful job of picking up where Trent Jones left off. "I was surprised," says Gregg, "at the continuity of the entire layout, considering the course was designed by two different architects—10 years apart."

Because there's little need to tamper with success, the original designs are still intact, with only minor modifications. Among the changes Gregg has initiated in his tenure are a tee box enlargement program and the renovation of all the course's bunkers. By the time of the outing, you'll see his handiwork—and his crew's—on 35 of the course's 55 bunkers. All bunker work has been done "in-house."

Born and raised in Saratoga Springs, NY, Gregg grew up under the influence of an avid golfer—his father. The family belonged to the local Ballston Spa Golf Club, where Gregg's father served eight

years as green chairman, giving Gregg a preview of what a green chairman-superintendent relationship was all about.

After working several seasons part time, both in Ballston's Club Room and on the grounds crew, Gregg got hooked—on golf and golf course management.

When he graduated high school in 1983, he decided to pursue formal training in turfgrass management, first at Catawba Community College in North Carolina and then at Lake City Community College in Florida, where he completed an associate's degree in golf course operations.

During his college years, he gained valuable experience working at the Golf and Polo Club of Saratoga and The Sagamore Club—both in upstate New York—and at the Tournament Players Club at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra, FL.

After graduating, he accepted his first assistant superintendent's position at Siwanoy Country Club in Bronxville, NY. Two years later, Gregg moved on to Woodway Country Club in Darien, CT, and then to his first superintendent's position at Rockrimmon in October '88.

Though the meeting is scheduled too early in the season to see the course in all its flowering splendor, Gregg does hope to employ summer rules for those playing golf.

When he's not hard at work on the course, Gregg says he enjoys a good round of golf and spending time with his wife, Patti. The two live on club grounds.

DENNIS PETRUZZELLI
Lakeover Country Club

Info Alert

Calling for Reid Award Nominations

Now's the time to submit your nominations for the 1992 John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award. Keep in mind the recipient should be someone who "has demonstrated a knowledge of—and

commitment to—the game of golf and the science of golf course management."

Please send or call in your nominations to Larry Pakkala, Woodway Country Club, 412 Hoyt Street, Darien, CT 06820, 203-329-8257.

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ADDRESS: P.O. Box 396, Mamaroneck, NY 10543.

Environmental Checklist

Pesticides

☐ *Have you adopted any of the principles of integrated pest management (IPM)?*

This includes using new technologies for monitoring pests, predicting outbreaks, and justifying applications of pesticides—and water. Among the tools available: diagnostic and forecasting kits, computer integrated pest forecasting equipment, soil temperature and moisture monitoring devices.

For more on IPM, contact the GCSAA, 800-472-7878, for a copy of *Integrated Pest Management for Turfgrass and Ornamentals*. Compiled in conjunction with the EPA, this manual offers a compendium of IPM articles to help turfgrass managers avoid the unnecessary use of chemicals. The cost: \$10.

☐ *Are you supporting new research?* We all should be responsive to research that improves our understanding of turfgrass pests and stresses, that seeks to develop new pest control measures that are environmentally acceptable, or that aims to develop pest-resistant and low-water-use grasses for golf.

☐ *Are you handling pesticides responsibly?* It's critical that we strictly adhere to regulations for applying (Do you heed state posting laws?), storing (Is your pesticide storage area up to code?), and disposing of pesticides, residues, and containers (Is your pesticide rinsate adequately contained?). Pesticide misuse, overuse, or accidents are guaranteed to hasten pesticide restrictions, if not their removal from the market.

☐ *Do you communicate the pros of pesticide use—and the consequences of low-to-no pesticide use—to your membership?* Educate members about the benefits of pesticides and how they're used safely on golf courses. For every study that attempts to knock pesticides, present one that supports them. The GCSAA's—and our own—Government Relations Committee are great sources for this type of good press.

You might also consider showing members the GCSAA's video *Links With Nature*. This 14-minute tape explains how golf course superintendents work in concert with the environment. Borrow a copy through the GCSAA's

lending library or through our own association by contacting our Government Relations Chairman, Joe Alonzi, 914-472-1467. You can also purchase a copy for \$20 through the GCSAA.

Finally, be sure to point out that a pesticide-free maintenance program won't keep a course entirely free of pest damage—at least not in the near future. The result: Members will have to accept less-than-perfect playing conditions.

Water Conservation

☐ *Are you making a conscientious effort to conserve water?* We shouldn't wait for a drought emergency to handle water responsibly.

☐ *Is your irrigation system operating efficiently?* Be sure that leaks and clogged nozzles are repaired and that automatic irrigation timers are functioning properly.

☐ *Do you have a contingency plan for dealing with water restrictions?* Now's the time to formulate a contingency plan—not during a water shortage. For help, you might speak to Joe Alonzi, 914-472-1467. As a representative on the New York Drought Task Force, he's been closely involved in the development of a drought emergency contingency plan.

Groundwater Protection

☐ *Are you conscientious about disposing of any hazardous substances—e.g., antifreeze, gas, oil, or unused chemicals, whether in a spray tank or container—according to regulations?*

☐ *Are you complying with underground storage tank regulations?* Tank failures, as you know, can put our groundwater in jeopardy and result in costly cleanup bills. So it's wise to replace old tanks before there's a problem. Your first step would be to speak to your local fire marshal. That's the person who's up on all the local regulations, which take precedence over state and federal laws.

Noise Pollution

☐ *Are you adhering to local noise ordinances that govern the hours in which you can operate your equipment?*

☐ *Do you communicate with concerned*

neighbors? First, it's important that you show neighbors that their concerns do matter. Second, it's helpful to inform them of the problems the noise ordinance presents for you—e.g., not being able to complete your work before the course opens to golfers.

☐ *Have you tried to rethink your maintenance practices to accommodate neighbors' concerns?* For instance, you might alter your mowing practices by starting on areas of the course that aren't bordered by homes—even if the mowing sequence isn't the most logical.

Worker Safety

☐ *Do you have a safety and training program in place for your crew?* Don't wait for an accident to happen. Offer employees proper job-specific training. You might start by showing training videos available through your equipment manufacturers or through the GCSAA, USGA, and National Golf Foundation. Among the topics you might want to cover: operation of powered maintenance equipment and tools; mowing equipment; tractors, loaders, and backhoes; pesticide safety; fire safety and prevention; tree maintenance; first-aid.

☐ *Is your equipment in good working order?*

☐ *Is your machinery equipped with up-to-date safety features?* Example: rollover bars for your tractors and mowers.

☐ *Do you have proper safety apparel available to employees?* Examples: respirators, eye guards, gloves, ear protection, hard hats.

☐ *Do you have right-to-know stations where employees have easy access to MSDS sheets?*

Completing this checklist is probably one of the most important priorities we have right now. Ensuring that our maintenance operations are environmentally sound could only help the turfgrass industry—by building our credibility among environmental groups and regulatory agencies as responsible professionals with the environment's best interest at heart.

TIM O'NEILL, CGCS
President

Addiction in the Workplace

forms you can use to document unsatisfactory work performance. We've included a sample (see blue insert) that's both detailed and precise, leaving little room for interpretation or debate. This is particularly useful when dealing with an employee who resists "facing the facts" or if you ever have to justify your actions in court.

Second Step: An Informal Performance Review

The first performance review should be as nonconfrontational as possible. The objective is to allow the employee to correct the problem with little fuss.

Take the employee aside and mention that he or she has been observed coming in late, taking extended breaks—or whatever the problem might be. At this point, don't pull out any documentation. Allow the employee to make excuses but offer no solutions. And resist the temptation to behave as a counselor. Focus only on job performance. It is, however, appropriate to mention counseling centers (see "Treatment Programs" piece below, right) available to troubled employees and to reassure the worker about confidentiality and job security if help is sought.

Here's how your first encounter might go:

Superintendent: *Bill, you've been the mainstay of the crew for five years, but recently you've been late to work a lot, and you've been hanging around too long on breaks.*

Bill: *Last week my car broke down and my wife couldn't drive me because she had to be at the kids' school.*

Superintendent: *And the guys have been complaining that you've been difficult to work with.*

Bill: *Who told you that? John? Joe? You know they both have it in for me.*

Superintendent: *You know, Bill, if you feel there's a personal problem that's affecting your work, I can suggest a few places to call to get confidential help.*

Bill: *No, there's nothing bothering me. I'm fine. I'll be on time. No sweat.*

Following this informal review, you should write a brief report on the meeting and attach it to your documentation. Include the date and time of the review,

and note that you recommended the employee get help if needed. That way, if the pattern of unsatisfactory performance continues or if it reappears after a period of good performance, you'll have the earlier record to refer to.

Third Step: A Formal Performance Review

If the employee's performance hasn't improved in four to six weeks, conduct a second, this time *formal*, performance review. At this point, make it clear the employee is being called on the carpet.

If you're a union shop, it's a good idea to inform the employee's union representative that the meeting will take place, and if appropriate, give the rep the chance to be present.

Sit the employee down and review your documentation of his or her impaired work performance.

Never mention off-the-job incidents or suggest the employee might have a drug or alcohol problem. Stick to what you're best qualified to judge: the worker's deteriorating job performance.

Feel free, however, to emphasize the possibility of a "personal problem," and

again, recommend that the employee seek counseling.

At the end of the review, you and the employee should work out an agreement to improve performance. Put the agreement in writing (see sample on blue insert), and have the employee sign it. Be sure the employee understands that the agreement will become part of his or her permanent work record and that the employee's job is at risk if he or she fails to live up to this agreement. Set specific dates for future progress reviews.

Here's how a formal performance review might be conducted:

Superintendent: *Bill, you've been with the club a long time, and I value your work. But over the past two months, your job performance hasn't been satisfactory. We talked about this last month, and I hoped that would be enough. But as far as I can see, except for a day or two after our conversation, there hasn't been any improvement.*

Bill: *Well, I've had a lot of things going on at home and the kids and all . . .*

Superintendent: *Look, Bill, I've been keeping count of the days you've been late or absent. You've been late to work 28 times in two months.*

Bill: *A few minutes here and there . . .*

Can't a guy punch in late now and then?

Superintendent: *On one occasion—the 20th of last month—you came in 15 minutes late for work. The next day you came in 13 minutes late. Two days later you were almost 30 minutes late.*

Bill: *Yeah, and I made it up after work, didn't I?*

Without responding to Bill's hostility, the superintendent goes on, citing more specifics of poor performance. Eventually, under the weight of accumulated evidence, Bill runs out of excuses.

Superintendent: *It's not just absences and tardiness, Bill. As I mentioned when we met last, I'm getting complaints from the other guys. Two guys came to me last week and said they wouldn't work with you on that drainage project. They say you don't pull your weight anymore.*

Bill: *If you're going to listen to that stuff, I'm going straight to the union.*

Treatment Programs

How to Find Counseling for "Troubled" Employees

To find the names of drug and alcohol treatment programs in your area, all you need is a phone book and telephone. Check the classifieds under the headings Alcohol, Alcoholism, Drugs, Drugs and Alcoholism, Hospitals. You might also phone your county's health or mental health department for this information.

National Help Lines that might provide assistance are:

- 1-800-ALCOHOL (800-252-6465)
- 1-800-COCAINE (800-262-2463)
- Drugs Anonymous, 212-874-0700
- Narcotics Anonymous, 818-780-3951
- National Institute of Drug Abuse, 1-800-622-HELP
- PRIDE Drug Information System, 1-800-241-7946

Documentation of Unsatisfactory Job Performance

Employee's Name _____ Title _____

Check the phrase or phrases that best describe the current situation. Jot down specific details, where appropriate, in the space provided beneath each entry. (See *Special Feature, page 1*, for explanation of this and other sample forms on this sheet.)

General Appearance

- ☐ Significant inappropriate appearance
- ☐ Significant lack of hygiene
- ☐ Other

Workplace Behavior

- ☐ Talks excessively
- ☐ Exaggerates self-importance
- ☐ Inflexible about procedures
- ☐ Argumentative
- ☐ Inappropriate emotional outbursts
- ☐ Excessive use of telephone
- ☐ Physically threatening
- ☐ Other

Temperament at Work

- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Suspicious
- ☐ Feelings easily hurt
- ☐ Agitated, edgy
- ☐ Extreme mood swings
- ☐ Other

Job Performance

- ☐ Forgets instructions, procedures, corrections, etc.
- ☐ Other unusual memory loss
- ☐ Working abnormally slowly
- ☐ Erratic (high-low) productivity
- ☐ Poor judgment
- ☐ Excessive complaints about job
- ☐ Intoxicated on the job
- ☐ Other

Relationship With Coworkers

- ☐ Abnormal reaction to criticism
- ☐ Borrows money from coworkers
- ☐ Resents other workers
- ☐ Has unrealistic expectations (for salary, promotion, etc.)
- ☐ Imagines criticism where there is none
- ☐ Receives complaints from coworkers
- ☐ Receives complaints from members
- ☐ Receives complaints from community
- ☐ Other

Absenteeism

- ☐ Excessive absences
- ☐ Improbable excuses for absences
- ☐ Frequent unscheduled absences
- ☐ Absences follow a pattern
- ☐ Excessive tardiness
- ☐ Excessive trips to car, water fountain, restroom, etc.
- ☐ Excessively long coffee breaks
- ☐ Excessive sick leave
- ☐ Other

Accidents

- ☐ Failure to wear safety gear
- ☐ Abnormally casual about safety procedures
- ☐ Complaints from coworkers about employee's safety standards
- ☐ Near-accidents on the job
- ☐ Accidents on the job
- ☐ Other

Further Observations Regarding Unusual Employee Behaviors:

Documentation of Tardiness, Absences, Requests for Leave

Employee's Name _____ Title _____

Dates of Tardiness (over _____ minutes) and Excuse Given:

Dates of Sick Leave Requested and Reasons Given:

Dates of Absence and Excuse Given:

Dates of Personal Leave and Reasons Given:

Further Observations Regarding Employee Tardiness, Absence, and Leaves:

Agreement to Improve Job Performance

This agreement is made between [employee's name] and [your name].

I have advised [employee's name] of the following matters that need correction: [Supply list.]

I have also informed [employee's name] that assistance is available through [whichever counseling services you suggested].

[Employee's name] agrees that the following corrective action will be taken: [Employee fills in steps agreed on.]

A review of this plan will be made on [date and time].

If at that time, these matters are settled as planned, this will be noted. If work performance continues to be unsatisfactory, this agreement will be used as part of any disciplinary or corrective action necessary.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
[Employee]

Signed: _____ Date: _____
[Superintendent]

Sample Letter of Reprimand

Dear [employee's name],

On [month, day, year], we discussed the continuing problem of your [note specific problems]. You were told at that time that your job performance was unsatisfactory. We agreed (copy of agreement to improve job performance attached) that you would correct the following: [list items]. However, the problems have continued [list particulars].

Persistent work problems, such as those you are experiencing, are the result of personal problems. In recognition of this fact, I strongly suggest you contact [list outside counseling centers] in an effort to clear up these problems.

Unless your job performance shows substantial improvement within the next [week, month], I will have no choice but to recommend that formal disciplinary action be taken against you.

Signed: _____
[Superintendent]

Superintendent: *I've already spoken to your union rep, Bill. He's as concerned as I am that something's bothering you and making it hard to put in a good day's work. He knows about this meeting, and I've promised him a complete report when we're finished.*

Neither one of us wants to see a good man lose his job—especially when there are so many ways to get help. Here are the numbers you can call for counseling. I don't want to have to let you go, but unless your performance improves and stays improved, I'm going to have to.

Bill: *Okay, okay.*

Superintendent: *I've got a form here I'd like you to look at and sign. It says that you and I have talked this over and that you've agreed to correct the problems we spoke about. It says here that I've advised you of certain problems like tardiness and not getting along with others on the crew. Now, I'd like you to fill in the lines about corrective action. This way we both know*

for sure what happened in this meeting. And let's set a date now to review your progress.

Fourth Step: A Letter of Reprimand

If the subsequent review shows that the employee's performance has not improved according to the terms of the signed agreement, your next step is to write a letter of reprimand. Include in this letter (see sample on blue insert) the date and times of previous reviews, notes of the employee's failure to keep his or her performance commitment, dates and times of continued impaired performance, and a threat of specific disciplinary action, whether it's demotion, suspension, or termination. Finally, the letter should strongly suggest that the employee seek assistance. Copies of this letter should go into the employee's file and to the employee, club manager, and union representative.

Last Step: Disciplinary Action

At this point, you have a legally defensible right to discipline—demote, suspend, or terminate—an impaired employee who refuses to get the help that is available, offered, and badly needed.

Final Word

If this process seems like more trouble than it's worth, keep this in mind: Studies show that if a drug- or alcohol-addicted person can get help early in the disease, chances of recovery are far greater. Furthermore, early interventions generally translate into shorter periods of treatment—which represents fewer insurance payments and days away from work.

Handled well, intervention can represent a win-win situation—for both you and your employee.

Special thanks to Alpine Tree Care's Director of Safety, Mike Cook, for giving us this article idea and providing our introductory statistics.

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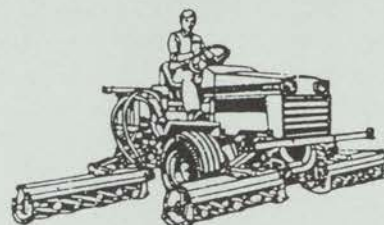
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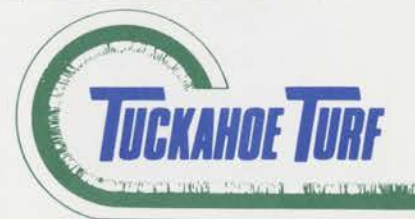
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Monthly Meeting Calendar Changes

Golf Meeting

Monday, June 1
Whippoorwill Club, Armonk, NY

Host superintendent: Chuck Martineau.

Golf Meeting

Monday, September 21
Ridgewood Country Club, Danbury, CT

Host superintendent: Dave Kerr.

MGA Green Chairmen Educational Series

Part 2: Green Speed

Thursday, June 25
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Ridgewood Country Club
Ridgewood, NJ

This is the second in a three-part educational series designed to focus on the role of the green chairman and his working relationship with the golf course superintendent. For further information, contact the MGA, 914-698-0390.

Turfgrass Field Day

1992 Cornell Turfgrass Field Day

Wednesday, July 1
Pine Island, NY

The latest Cornell turf research will be presented, as well as demonstrations of sod production, sod installation, and IPM methods. The educational sessions will be complemented by a trade show that will feature the latest in turf equipment and supplies.

For further information, call Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County: 914-343-1105 or 344-1234, or NYSTA: 800-873-TURF or 518-783-1229.

Congratulations

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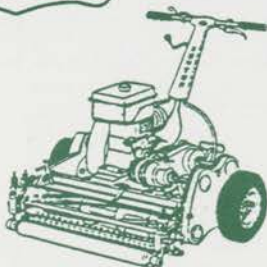
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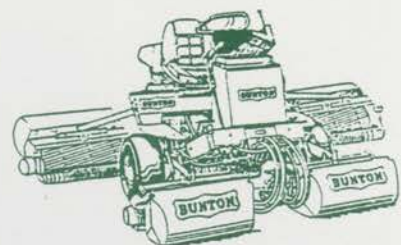
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