

## Twelve Steps to Safety Step Seven: Housekeeping

By Alan Achatz, CCM, CHE



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**I**n September 2003, CMAA signed an Alliance with OSHA to promote safe and healthful working conditions for membership club employees in the areas of hazard

communication, recordkeeping and respiratory protection. In February 2005, CMAA renewed its Alliance and added a new scope of concentration, landscaping and horticulture. The Alliance was again renewed in October of 2007. This article, the seventh in a series of 12, was written by club industry expert Alan Achatz, CCM, CHE, of AKA Capitol Adventures in conjunction with participants in the OSHA and CMAA Alliance. The purpose of this series is to help new and seasoned managers embark on a path to safety compliance at their facilities.

When assessing the hazards that employees may encounter in the housekeeping arena, it is important to ask the following questions:

- What hazards are employees exposed to?
- What tasks do they undertake?
- What chemicals do they use?
- Do they use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for these tasks and for chemicals they use?
- Do employees receive annual training about chemical hazards?

*Housekeeping employees are the eyes and ears of the operation. They are the first persons to encounter safety concerns.*



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Explain to the housekeeping employees that they are the eyes and ears of the operation. They have to know that they are the first persons to encounter safety concerns. If they see any policies or procedures that need to be corrected, they have to bring it to management's attention.

### Hazards

The housekeeping staff encounters virtually every hazard in the clubhouse. A typical list of housekeeping staff tasks may include vacuuming, dusting, cleaning, polishing, sanitiz-

ing, emptying the trash, setting up rooms including moving tables, chairs, couches and other heavy furniture, and dry or wet mopping.

Specialized tasks might include cleaning spots from carpets, cleaning Oriental carpets, buffing floors, caring for antiques, cleaning marble or brass or polishing the crystals on chandeliers.

### Lifting/Back Strains

These are the most common injuries that housekeeping employees experience. The physical requirements

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## Professional Development

### Mentor a Manager; Shape the Future

The Manager in Development (MID) program began as an inspiration by William Schulz, MCM, general manager of the Houston Country Club, as he developed the concept for his MCM monograph, and was sent to an initial group of applicants seven years ago. Today, more than 500 CMAA members, primarily assistant managers and department heads, are engaged in this practical, hands-on training program that explores the core competency areas in their clubs.

The Manager in Development program is available to CMAA members FREE! The cost to non-members is \$500. This hands-on, modular-style, workbook/CD series is designed to be completed by any current assistant manager, departmental supervisor or club intern as he or she conducts his or her regularly assigned club duties. The program should be completed within three years and, upon completion, the candidate will receive 60 CMI credits (equivalent to two BMIs).

MID participants will learn about all functional areas within a club; prepare themselves for career advancement; attain a challenging and measurable benchmark in club management; confirm studies in a working club operation; and develop a relationship with a club manager as a mentor. This program is a gateway to the club management profession and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth, as well as a source of fresh ideas and enhancement of practical skills gained through actually working in the club.

Sponsoring mentors have the opportunity to share their knowledge of the club industry and management profession, assist with the staffing needs of their clubs, "give back" to the club industry and acquire ten Activity Credits in the process.

For more information and/or to obtain an application, please call the Education Department at (703) 739-9500 or visit our Web site at [www.cmaa.org/prodev/amid](http://www.cmaa.org/prodev/amid). ♦

## Association Services

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of pushing, pulling, lifting, dragging, bending, reaching and grasping can contribute to these injuries.

Instructional videos on lifting can be obtained from your insurance company to raise employee awareness and potentially reduce injuries. Another step you can take is to review where injuries are occurring and determine if a design or environmental issue causes them.

#### Slips, Trips, Falls

Is there a raised molding, perhaps a loose carpet seam or maybe an elevation change that makes the trip happen? Walk through the operation looking for these concerns and do not hesitate to ask the employees if there are any hazards that they have noticed that need to be addressed.

If wet or slippery floors and/or walking surfaces are identified as a potential hazard to employees, management should further assess the operations and the facilities to

determine the source of the hazard. Contributing factors could be the process itself (dishwashing or pool maintenance), the type of floor surface used (tile or slip resistant flooring) and the footwear used by the employees (do they have slip resistant soles?). Appropriate corrections need to be made when a potential hazard is identified.

#### Chemical Exposure

How are the various chemicals dispensed? Via aerosol propelled cans, trigger spray bottles, pouring powders or liquids into a bucket, pumping the chemical out of a 55-gallon drum or by diluting a concentrate? Each one of these methodologies poses a hazard. Is the staff combining two or more chemicals? Might the very act of using one



*Special attention must be paid to extension cords and cords on vacuums.*

cleaner with another create a chemical reaction? Might this chemical cocktail cause a potentially dangerous result?

Under OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) (29 CFR 1910.1200), all employers are responsible for informing and training workers about the hazards in their workplaces, retaining warning labels and making available MSDSs (Material Safety Data Sheet) with hazardous chemicals. All workplaces where employees are exposed to hazardous chemicals must have a written plan describing how the standard will be

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implemented in that facility. The written program must reflect what employees are doing in a particular workplace. For example, the written plan must list the chemicals present at the site, indicate who is responsible for the various aspects of the program in that facility and where written materials will be made available to employees. The written program must describe how the requirements for labels and other forms of warning, MSDSs and employee information and training are going to be met in the facility.

While not required by OSHA, CMAA suggests that clubs hold annual training about chemical hazards and MSDSs for all affected employees. This training may illustrate what compounds cannot be combined. Even more important is to ensure that your employees are wearing appropriate PPE for the chemicals they are using.

Label the containers of all chemicals. Just because it is blue does not mean it is window cleaner. Just because it is clear does not mean it is water. What if an employee is color-

blind? Should you label the chemical containers in multiple languages? YES! If you have employees with limited English, label products in the languages they can read.

Whether cleaning the floor, walls, windows, counters, mirrors, toilets or urinals, some of the strongest chemicals used in the club are used in restrooms. Are all the chemicals compatible or might any two or more have a reaction if they encounter another? You will have to do a review of your MSDSs to determine the answer. It is important to note that employees using caustic and/or corrosive chemical cleaning products (and/or other hazardous chemicals) should be provided – and be required to wear – adequate PPE, including appropriate eye and/or face protection. In addition, emergency eyewashes should be placed in all hazardous areas including chemical mixing areas. Employees must know where the closest eyewash station is and how to get there with restricted vision. Eyewashes must be provided in chemical mixing locations and must be in

accessible locations. One way to help ensure eyewashes are accessible is to have an employee close her/his eyes and find the eyewash.

#### Taking Out the Trash

How far does it have to be moved? How heavy is it? What is in the bag? Do the employees compress the contents by pushing down on it with their hands or feet? What is the likelihood the bag will break? These are all great questions, yet employee practices have to be reviewed for even this seemingly simple task.

Educate the employees that the garbage may contain broken items or, worse yet, used needles. Impress upon them that compressing the trash should only be done if their footwear is impervious to punctures. Another concern is the transportation process. A sharp item may cause a leg injury while carrying or dragging the bag.

#### Exposure to Bodily Fluids

Cleaning up blood, vomit and/or excrement is not an easy task and the employees should recognize that appropriate PPE must be worn. Where employees are expected to be exposed to blood and body fluids as a normal part of their job, the employer must establish a program in accordance with OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens standard (29 CFR 1910.1030), which includes, among other elements, a requirement for annual employee training on the hazards of exposure to blood and body fluids and the methods and materials required to be used by exposed employees.

#### Electrical

Electrical hazards are potential concerns. Special attention must be paid to extension cords and cords

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on the vacuums. These cords might become frayed or pulled out of the vacuum housing. The wires can be twisted inside the wire shell from improperly rewinding the cords and/or the plugs can be separated from the cord by pulling the cord from the wall. When damaged cords are observed, the equipment should be immediately removed from service.

Are any electrical cords run under carpets or under chair mats? If so, ensure the cords are encased in cord channels.

Are cords run through walls or door frames? Are extension cords being used to power plug strips or is the inverse the case?

Are cords in a wet location? If so, bracket them up to keep them dry.

#### Allergens

Knowing what your employees are allergic to and or what they might be exposed to are additional concerns.

Dust, mold, animal/rodent/vermin

dander or excrement might also cause an employee's reaction.

For more information on how your club can benefit from the Alliance and OSHA topics specific to the club industry, please visit [www.cmaa.org/legislat/osha.asp](http://www.cmaa.org/legislat/osha.asp) or contact Melissa Low, director, Industry Resources and Legislative

Services, at [melissa.low@cmma.org](mailto:melissa.low@cmma.org) or (703) 739-9500.

*This article was written by club industry expert Alan Achatz, CCM, CHE, of AKA Capitol Adventures in conjunction with participants in the OSHA and CMAA Alliance. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor.* ♦

#### Additional Resources

**Toolbox Talks for Club Employees:  
Slips and Falls Inside the Clubhouse:**  
[www.cmaa.org/legislat/osha.asp](http://www.cmaa.org/legislat/osha.asp)

**Toolbox Talks for Club Employees:  
The Importance of Handwashing:**  
[www.cmaa.org/legislat/importanceOfHandwashing.pdf](http://www.cmaa.org/legislat/importanceOfHandwashing.pdf)

**OSHA Hazard Communication Safety and Health Topics Page:**  
[www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardcommunications/index2.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardcommunications/index2.html)

**OSHA Assistance for the Cleaning Industry Safety and Health Topics Page:**  
[www.osha.gov/dcspp/products/topics/cleaningindustry/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/dcspp/products/topics/cleaningindustry/index.html)

### Insuring Your Club's Environmental Performance

By Kevin A. Fletcher, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, Audubon International

**W**hy worry about taking extra steps to address your club and golf course's environmental profile? It's really a side issue – good for people interested in putting up a birdfeeder here or there, or maybe replacing a light bulb. The answer is simple. It's good business. A new set of partnerships have recently helped to reinforce this fact.

This past year, Audubon International forged new partnerships with two insurance firms to highlight and reward those clubs and golf courses that take the natural environment seriously. To an insurance company, certification for environmental leadership by clubs through a program like the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program is a signal of a well-managed business. There is enough research to support this fact – proof of enhanced environmental performance by businesses means they have their act together and are a good risk.

This is why Audubon International, as a part of its Golf & the Environment Initiative, has been working with Signature Risk and Fireman's Fund Insurance Company to kick-start a coordinated effort by the insurance section. Signature Risk will provide up to a ten percent discount on insurance premiums to any golf facility certified through an Audubon International program. Fireman's Fund Insurance will also recognize Audubon International certification in the rate-setting process. This is good news. Regardless of whether or not you are or look to be insured by these two Audubon International partners, the lesson is clear. The steps taken to address environmental issues by working through environmental certification programs like those offered by Audubon International can be a part of a larger business strategy to cut costs and manage risk more effectively.

For more information, please visit [www.auduboninternational.org](http://www.auduboninternational.org). ♦