



HOW TO COMMUNICATE THE NECESSITY OF GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE *WHEN CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC* DURING COVID-19

In an effort to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, many state and local governments have begun closing all “non-essential” businesses in their jurisdictions, often including golf courses. It is critical for GCSAA members to communicate to lawmakers that, although a golf course may be closed to the public, the grass does not stop growing and basic property maintenance must be conducted during this period of temporary closure. Below are points to consider when communicating with lawmakers.

Golf courses are partnering with state and local governments during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Governors, Mayors, and other leaders in government are currently under considerable pressure to protect the health and safety of the citizens in their states and cities.
- The golf industry understands the difficult position they are in and stands ready to do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Golf course superintendents have provided leadership at their clubs and courses by establishing safety protocols in accordance with guidelines issued by the CDC and other regulatory bodies.

Like many other businesses temporarily closed, golf properties require maintenance to remain viable for future use

- Similar to other businesses that have been required to close to the public during COVID-19, golf courses have essential maintenance needs that must continue for the preservation of the property’s agronomic health.
- An average golf course encompasses 150 acres of property, most of which is a living ecosystem requiring continued maintenance.
- If a course cannot be maintained, turfgrass and plant life will decline, and the community will lose a vital asset.
- Environmental health of the property can be achieved with appropriate changes to maintenance staff functions that put the greatest emphasis on safety.

Golf courses must remain environmental assets to their communities

- Spring is a critical time for turfgrass. If turfgrass is lost, many courses may face permanent closure. Turfgrass cannot be neglected for extended periods of time.
- Maintenance should be allowed to proceed while a golf course is closed.
- If minimal maintenance is not allowed, the landscape and property of a golf course could become compromised, damaged, or unsafe.
 - Crime and vandalism are much more likely on properties not consistently monitored.
 - Populations of disease carrying pests, such as mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas can quickly multiply threatening human and animal health.
- The potential for damage to critical golf course infrastructure, including pump stations and irrigation lines, will also be avoided by allowing routine operations, testing, and inspection.

The golf industry is proactively implementing all necessary precautions at golf facilities

- The golf industry is taking all necessary precautions to keep maintenance staff safe by taking into account all health advisories and recommendations by the CDC.
- To emphasize safety, Golf Course Superintendents have proactively adjusted maintenance practices in many ways, including but not limited to:
 - Increasing communication with owners, management, and staff regarding altered golf course management practices
 - Taking temperature of staff members as they arrive
 - Staggering of staff starting times to reduce employee contact points
 - Keeping 6 ft social distancing at all times throughout the day
 - Eliminating time clocks or assigning one individual the responsibility of punching employees in/out to reduce touch points
 - Increased sanitizing of all workspaces and bathrooms
 - Mandatory wearing of gloves at all times
 - No sharing of utility vehicles
 - Sanitizing all hand tools

How and when should I contact my elected officials?

- The golf industry has been actively engaged with numerous executive and legislative offices at the federal, state, and local level regarding government directives related to COVID-19.
- The We Are Golf coalition will be conveying these and similar points to many governor's offices.
- To learn more about what outreach has already taken place in your state and what the next steps for outreach may be, please contact Michael Lee, GCSAA Manager of Government Affairs at 816-663-2154 or mlee@gcsaa.org.
- It is critical during this time that the golf industry maintain a unified message. Any outreach conducted should be in coordination with your chapter and allied golf associations in your state.
- Work closely with your chapter executives and contract lobbyists who may be able to help you deliver the right message, at the right time, to the right decision maker in government.

Additional Resources for Employers and Employees

In addition to resources created by state departments of health which may vary from state to state, below are additional resources GCSAA members may find useful:

GCSAA Resources:

[GCSAA COVID-19 Pandemic Online Resources](#)

CDC information for businesses:

[Interim guidance for business and employers](#)

[Cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#)

[Managing stress and anxiety](#)