

Are your golf courses in tip-top shape?

By Carlene Brown

Summer is here and so is the task of making sure your golf courses are in tip-top shape. Golf courses owned and operated by members may result in liability exposure for injury to persons or damage to property because of errant golf balls, slip and falls, and even golf cart accidents. Members should also consider having adequate outdoor lighting and installing security cameras to minimize the threat of theft and vandalism.

Adequate warning of any known hazard should be posted in visible areas. This may include signs for areas under repair, temporary water hazards, closed tee boxes or holes, path detours, and alerting users if potentially dangerous or disruptive animals are known to inhabit or be present on the golf course.

While golf carts are useful to both workers and players, they also increase the risk of accidents and injuries. It is recommended to take precautions by providing golf cart operation instructions and enforcing rules for golf carts and requiring players to sign a liability waiver.

Golfers should be informed that they are responsible for their golf balls and any damage that may occur. This can be done with signage and noted on golf scorecards. In addition, course rules should be clearly posted at the golf pro shop as well as on the scorecard along with a notice stating: **“Golf Course operators reserve the right to prohibit or terminate play by persons who violate course rules or who engage in conduct that endangers the safety of other course users.”**

Keeping the course and amenities in tip-top shape is imperative to preventing slips, trips, and falls. As a safety precaution, staff should be trained to make reports of injuries, property damage, or unsafe course conditions. Your staff should also document complaints in writing and promptly investigate each complaint while taking appropriate corrective action when required.

WCIA recommends that members adopt risk management procedures to assist in citizen reporting. For a sample citizen action request form, please refer to: [PAR 16.01 Sample Citizen Action Request Form](#) which can be found in the park section of the WCIA Liability Resource Manual. With proper planning, risk management strategies can mitigate the effects of these risks.

In addition, guidelines on golf course maintenance along with liability waivers can also be found in the Liability Resource Manual. For the guidelines regarding managing golf courses and driving ranges, please refer to: [PAR.02 Golf Courses & Driving Ranges](#). The Liability Resource Manual is available through the Member Resources page on the WCIA website: <https://www.wciapool.org/174/Risk-Management>.

Your WCIA Risk Management Representative is also available for further information on risk managing your golf courses and driving ranges.