

## GUIDELINES FOR PESTICIDE USE ON GOLF COURSES

### THE ISSUE

The use of pesticides to manage diseases, pests and weeds on golf courses is coming under increasing political and social pressure. Golf must address the prevailing political and social movement towards the reduction in the use of pesticides if it is to achieve compliance and demonstrate responsible environmental stewardship.

Voluntary initiatives, based on best practice, can provide a good means of regulating pesticide use provided they are evidence-based.

Legislation does not always produce the desired outcomes. If resorted to, legislation should take into account the needs of course managers not only to protect the environment but also to produce surfaces that cater for sustainable levels of playing and economic performance.

Every country has its own laws surrounding pesticide use and these must be adhered to.

The R&A guidelines for pesticide use take all of the above into account and will be kept under regular revision.

### THE R&A GUIDELINES

1. The onus should be on the individual or individuals at the golf facility responsible for the decision to use a pesticide to justify that action. If a decision is made to spray any pesticide on the course the user should be able to demonstrate that:

- there is a serious issue with deterioration in playing quality to be addressed
- the proposed action is not for purely cosmetic reasons
- alternative methods of management are being implemented, including the use of correct grass species, but are not achieving an acceptable level of control
- the use of a pesticide is more sustainable than cultural management techniques
- applications of single site fungicides from the same biochemical families are being avoided as this has the potential to induce resistance within the target organism
- an assessment has been made which shows there will be no significant ecological impacts on plants and animals from application
- a risk assessment has been undertaken to identify potential pollution threats and policies have been drawn up to eliminate or minimise these threats

- personnel involved in the storage, handling, application and disposal of pesticides are suitably trained.
2. Routine (prophylactic) applications of pesticide without identification of disease, pest or weed activity or a high risk of outbreaks must not be made.
  3. Only approved products should be used, in accordance with legal requirements, regulations, standards and guidelines.
  4. Products should never be used on environmentally designated land without the prior permission of the appropriate regulatory authority.
  5. Products should be stored, handled and applied in accordance with relevant legislation, guidelines and manufacturer's instructions.
  6. There should be no excess product following pesticide application, as this is wholly avoidable through good training and calibration of spraying equipment.
  7. Empty containers should be disposed of safely and in accordance with relevant legislation, guidelines and manufacturer's instructions.
  8. Accurate, up to date records must be kept of all products purchased and used on the course that pose or may pose a pollution threat.
  9. Records should be kept on all activities so those responsible for managing the golf course can assess the results they achieve on the playing surface against the cultural, biological and pesticidal control measures put in place. This will enable refinement of disease, pest and weed management strategies to minimise pesticide use.
  10. There should be transparency in the use and reporting of use of products that pose or may pose a pollution threat.

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