



COMMUNICATING COVID-19 SAFETY PRECAUTIONS THE GOLF INDUSTRY IS TAKING CONCERNING PLAY

Many states around the country have allowed golf courses to remain open to the public for play while they implement policies to limit the spread of COVID-19. It is critical for GCSAA members to communicate to lawmakers the proactive steps being taken to provide a safe environment on the golf course for both maintenance staff and golfers alike.

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.
- We in the golf industry understand this difficult position and stand 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.

There are two components to a golf course: Indoor Facilities & Outdoor Facilities

- The clubhouse, pro shop and restaurant operation is just one small part of the footprint of a golf course. In states and cities where directives have called for restaurants and bars to limit food services to take-out and delivery only, golf courses have done the same.
- The outdoor component (the golf course) functions quite differently than the indoor component and thus, should be treated differently.
- Averaging 150 acres of open space, the opportunity for social distancing on a golf course is similar to other healthy activities, like taking a walk through one of our state parks or city trails.
- Many governmental bodies, including the states of [Washington](#) and [Michigan](#), recognize this fact and have allowed golf courses to remain open for play, giving participants a healthy and enjoyable experience while responsibly social distancing at the same time.
- Whether utilizing a cart or walking, playing golf oxygenates the body, provides mental and physical stimulus, and offers a place to enjoy fresh air and the outdoors.

Superintendents are proactively implementing necessary precautions at golf facilities

- Superintendents are taking all necessary precautions to keep maintenance staff and golfers safe by taking into account all health advisories and recommendations by the CDC.
- In fact, Superintendents are implementing healthy best practices for staff engaged in the management of the golf course, including:
 - Increasing communication with owners, green committees, members, golfers, and staff regarding altered golf course management practices
 - Taking temperature of staff members as they arrive
 - Keeping 6 ft social distancing at all times throughout the day
 - Staggering of staff starting times to reduce employee contact points
 - 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
 - Removal of ball washers, rakes and water coolers from the golf course to minimize touch points
 - Ensuring flagsticks are sanitized and remain in cups at all times
 - Raising cups 1" or turning cups upside down to eliminate points of contact on the green

Precautions for the golf course don't stop there

- The golf industry has developed specific operations protocols that support the directive of the CDC for both social distancing and environmental and sanitation management.
- All major golf organizations are collaborating to share best practices within industry.
- For employees, these protocols include, but are not limited to:
 - Educating staff on hygiene, sanitation, and food handling to learn about disease prevention and control.
 - Educating staff to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 and to act responsibly if they detect or exhibit symptoms.
 - Requiring all staff to wear protective gloves.
- Encouraging golfers and staff to refrain from handshakes. Other guest protocols include, but are not limited to:
 - Providing clear and professional signage informing guest of operational changes and encourage recommended sanitation practices.
 - Restricting access to most areas in the clubhouse to staff only.
 - Restricting clubhouse restaurant to provide only food and drinks to-go with "curbside service."
 - Encouraging golfers and staff to refrain from handshakes and maintain 6ft distance.
 - No tournaments or social activities.
 - Removal of outdoor furniture to discourage gathering in any one place.
 - Increasing the time between tee times.
 - Mandatory single cart use.
 - Modifying the driving range hitting areas to ensure minimum 6ft separation between players.
 - Ensuring restrooms are more frequently cleaned and sanitized.
 - Ensuring golf carts and other rental equipment are properly sanitized using approved antimicrobial products before and after issuance to customers.

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](#)