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- Couple with an environmental group that has environmental stewardship programs beyond the turfgrass industry. They assist in development of the plan and already have a number of BMP-based assessment templates for various environmental issues. Also, these groups can assist in the certification program development (see below).

- Allow multiple levels of sustainable management.

Environmental stewardship is an on-going and evolving process that allows a facility to be good, better, and best over time.

- Develop site assessment in a BMP template with BMP strategies for each issue and determining how comprehensive the site BMPs are for the issue. There may appear to be overlap in some areas but that is acceptable since each issue is evaluated on its own.

- Report in BMP Format should include suggested BMPs for each necessary issue to improve. Since site assessment is already in a BMP format, a final report can easily be presented as a BMP document; and when these are combined together, they form the final SSTM program document.

- Use online format for the basic program and as much as possible. Developing assessment tools that can be achieved by online input as much as possible allows site managers to develop their SSTM program over time as work schedule allows. There should be options for types of site assessment that may require outside assistance.

- Couple with academic entities to incorporate a sound science base, as the STMA has done.

- Include certification with multiple levels where there are options for improvement over time. Third party certification is best. By using a BMP-based template for site assessment, it is easy to evolve a multiple level certification program.

- Target governmental agency acceptance to this sustainable approach and the site sustainable plans that evolve. Certainly, at the state level, the state STMA organization may be able to work with the state environmental agency responsible for sustainability in the state. In reality, very few business organizations have proactively developed sustainable programs in cooperation with their state environmental agency. State STMA chapters can take leadership in doing this.

The sustainability emphasis is increasing and will not go away. If there is not a proactive response by each segment of the turf industry, we must accept what others develop, which likely would not include the best environmental management approaches being adopted into laws and regulations. As in sports, spectators do not have much to say about the outcome of the game. ■

Dr. Robert N. Carrow is Professor of Turfgrass Science in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at the University of Georgia in Griffin.

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The advertisement features a background image of a baseball game in progress. A batter in a white uniform is in the middle of a swing, while a pitcher in a red uniform is on the mound. An umpire and another player are visible in the foreground. The stadium lights and outfield are visible in the background.

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Creating and implementing an **EMERGENCY CRISIS PLAN**

CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A GOOD EMERGENCY CRISIS PLAN may save you from huge financial losses when an accident or an incident occurs at your facility and litigation is filed against you.

A serious accident or incident at your facility may haunt you for years, and may actually force you to close, due not only to bad press but also from the financial losses suffered in litigation. An emergency-crisis plan reduces these liability exposures, provides for a fast and organized response to the injured, and ensures accurate disbursement of information to the media. When created and implemented correctly it also reduces the potential charge of

negligence against you, as well.

An accident is an unforeseen event that normally involves an injury to a person(s) and many times damage to equipment or structures. An incident is also an unforeseen event; it may also

cause injury or damage and can quickly turn into a negative media event. Examples of incidents are riots, fights, inclement weather, bomb or chemical threats, fires, animal-related attacks, etc.

While you may have a very good loss-prevention plan, accidents and incidents happen regularly, not only to employees, but also to guests.

It is imperative that your loss-prevention plan also has an emergency-crisis plan. Your insurance carrier, legal team and possibly outside expert consultants should be involved in creating this critical component. While there are common policies to include in the plan, you need to create a plan specific to your facility, as each facility is different.

CREATE A PLAN

The safety director or a designee should start by researching all emergency-service responders who service the facility's area. Arrange to meet individually or collectively with them at your facility to discuss their needs and procedures when responding to an emergency. Distribute site maps on utilities and pathway entrances and exits and inform them of your staffing capabilities i.e., security, first aid and maintenance, hours of operation and other facility capabilities.

Conduct a facility walk-through so they are familiar with the layout of your facility and pre-plan their pathways to all of the areas where guests and employees have normal access. In these walk-throughs, determine and identify quadrants on your site map, entrance gates

The safety director or a designee should start by researching all emergency-service responders who service the facility's area.



Flashing light image ©istockphoto.com/nataq

and pathways for future reference when reporting an event.

Determine response policies and procedures with each service provider, including:

- A direct telephone number
- Proper identification and location of the emergency site to the responder via the telephone: use area identifications on your and their site maps to notify them of the area where they must respond as well as what entrance they should use

- The best ways to communicate the nature of the emergency
- Any other information that will help in the response

In addition to the local fire department, law enforcement, homeland security and ambulance services, include other specialty service providers for:

- Water rescue if appropriate
- Wild animal control
- Language translating services
- Drug use or sales
- Inclement-weather disasters

- Bomb threats or other acts of terrorism
- Shootings and other forms of violence
- Stress consulting services
- Relief organizations like the Red Cross
- Gang or other radical-group prevention organizations

Once you have completed the meetings, turn to your staff, legal team, insurance carrier and outside consultants and begin formulating an internal response to emergencies. It is your responsibility to identify within your facility staff the departments and individual who will be directly involved in the response actions.

There are two separate personnel groups and activities involved in responding to an emergency. First, there are those on your staff who actually are involved in the first-response chain-of-command. These might include general managers, safety directors, security personnel, first aid, maintenance and press personnel.

The second group involves the public relations department and additional management personnel that do not go to the scene.

INTERNAL RESPONSE PROCEDURES

A first procedure to implement is a pre-determined chain-of-command notification. If a guest first reports an emergency to an employee, he or she should contact the proper supervisory staff person to start chain-of-command notifications. Unfortunately, calling 9-1-1 is not always the best and fastest way to respond to all emergencies as the call is also available immediately to outside agencies, including the media. Once you establish direct response procedures and a relationship with an emergency service provider agency, it may prefer direct contact to ensure fast and proper response.

EMERGENCY SITE PROCEDURES

At the site of the emergency, first responders should give attention first to anyone who is injured. **Remember: Only qualified first-aid or medical personnel should touch or administer aid to seriously**

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injured people. Interview the injured person(s) to determine the nature of their injuries. Be sure to collect the following information and enter it in your incident report:

- His/her age
- Home address and contact information
- Member(s) of his/her party that are in attendance at the facility
- His/her version of the incident
- Persons to be notified on his/her behalf

Identify if there were any facility utilities, equipment, hazardous materials or machinery involved and notify the maintenance department to shut down the equipment or respond to any unsafe condition as a result of the event and request their immediate attention and response.

Give emergency responders an oral version of the condition of the injured when they arrive on site and the names and contact information of family members that should be notified regarding the injured.

Move spectators away from the scene while establishing a secure perimeter around the site and opening a pathway for service providers, and shutting down any utilities or equipment involved.

If possible, assign a staff member to take

photographs of the event scene that will assist future investigations of the event as well as becoming part of the event historical file.

Identify all guests and employees who witnessed the event, and gather them in a secure area. If possible, use a room or area away from the event scene where they can be interviewed privately. With your trained interviewers, interview guest witnesses. Use a pre-established form to record the interview.

- Create a report number and log tag line to describe the event
- Date and Time of interview, location of interview, interviewer's name
- Contact information of the witness: include where they work, their email address, their cell phone number as well as their residence information
- Age
- If they are members of the injured person's party
- Their version of the incident
- Draw a rough sketch of the area and establish where they were standing/located, noting approximate distances
- The interviewer should also sign the report

After the interview, ask the person to

review the form to make sure everything is correct; ask the person to initial each page of the form.

Pass out the form to all employees that witnessed or responded to the event and let them fill them out, noting their actions regarding the event. After completion, then review their report with them individually at the earliest possible time. Note the interviewers name and signature and when and where the report review takes place.

Important: The information gathered during the interviews is highly confidential and should only be shared with your general manager, safety director and defense team if litigation occurs. Employees should be instructed not to discuss this information with anyone, including other employees, media representatives, family or friends.

INTERACTING WITH THE MEDIA

The second personnel groups involved with the event are those responsible for public relations and press. An important part of the emergency-crisis plan is controlling and disbursing information surrounding the accident or incident, not only at the time of the event but throughout media coverage, which may continue for days or longer.

Many times when a significant accident or incident occurs, the media will come to the facility to report on it. You should strive to professionally control the information given and distribute as much positive information as possible.

Before an incident ever happens, the media press department should create generalized template press releases for every common or conceivable type of accident/incident that may occur. These pre-prepared press releases save valuable time in responding to media requests about the incident event. Select the one most appropriate to the event and fill in the details of the event in this press release template. Make multiple copies to distribute to the media.

In addition, several feature stories or detailed press releases should be created in advance, to provide to the media and be included in formal press kits assembled for media distribution at any time, including the event press conference. Included in this

press kit are stories such as facility history, statistics, photos, activities hosted, number of visitors annually, safety records, and copies of prior positive press coverage. Update this information regularly.

HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE

Make a meeting/conference room available for all press conferences. If no room is available, set up an exterior site away from the accident or incident location for the initial press conference. All media are directed and/or escorted (preferred) to this press conference location upon entering the facility. If possible, have beverages, snacks and press kits waiting, along with a pre-press conference "Host." Distribute the press kits to all media who attend the press conference. Be sure to copy press credentials for each person before beginning the press conference, and retain their business cards.

Start by having your press person make a statement, and then take questions. The goal

is to ensure that accurate information is delivered and that the facility is presented in the best light possible. The press should be escorted to the scene only after all witnesses have been secluded for interviews and the injured have already been transported to a local hospital or off of the site.

After the event scene is cleared and all injured are removed from the site and only after the site is cleared and cleaned, escort the media to the event site. At all times during this walk, treat the walk as if it was an information tour by pointing out the facilities positive activities, features and photo opportunities,

POST-EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safety director should contact all emergency responders and obtain a copy of their reports and the transport report of the injured persons if ambulances were used. The safety director should create a confidential file of all of the documents and write

their own executive summary of the documents and the event to add to the file.

Establish this procedure with the responders in your first site meetings with them. Moreover the safety director should follow up on the disposition of the injured as much as possible until they regain full health again. The safety director should continue regularly to coordinate with internal departments to ascertain their actions after the event, including maintenance repairs, press responses and all other pertinent information that may be significant to the defense of the facility in litigation.

Make sure the press director contacts the media regularly with updates/resolutions of the event. Make the media your friends for future relationships and more positive news and feature stories about your facility. ■

George Laibe is certified in loss prevention for amusement and recreation facilities. He can be reached at iaa2009@q.com.

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How NFL turf managers built their careers

Editor's note: We asked a number of National Football League turf managers who are also Sports Turf Managers Association members three questions: What are 3 important qualities an NFL turf manager must have to be successful? What specific education and/or work experiences best prepared you for your NFL career? What words of advice do you have for younger turf managers who aspire to work in the NFL?

WE START with Ross Kurcab, CSFM of the Denver Broncos and hear from Darian Daily (Bengals), Chris Morrow (Cowboys), Ken Mrock (Bears), Troy Smith (Broncos), Sean Vanos (Seahawks), Tom Vaughn (Panthers), Steve Wightman (Chargers) and finish with Tony Leonard of the Eagles.

ROSS KURCAB, CSFM, Denver Broncos

What are 3 important qualities an NFL turf manager must have to be successful?

My initial response would be “if you find out, tell me!” Honestly, the important qualities of success are probably the same as for other sports turf managers. Yet every sports field manager faces a unique set of challenges. Every challenge faced is a lesson learned, I believe. So

here are a few lessons I've learned (hopefully) over the eons:

- You have to be able to deliver the field in the NFL. Football, at all levels, is unique as a sport in this regard: There are no cancellations or weather postponements (except for lightning or other life threatening severe weather). Even ski races get called off for heavy snow! Three certainties are death, taxes, and kickoff at 2:15pm MST Sunday. Or as I like to say, “Rain or snow, it'll go!” Whether on the practice field, or at the stadium, the NFL doesn't tolerate “We can't.” You have to know all your challenges and meet them.

- “People skills” is not a trendy catchphrase. A great man, Dr. Jackie Butler at Colorado State University, would walk into the first lecture in H441-turfgrass science and write on the chalkboard: “There are no grass problems, only people problems.” Sure, I date myself with

Chris Morrow, Dallas Cowboys

YOU NEED DESIRE, to be able to think fast and outside the box, and have good verbal and communication skills. I majored in turfgrass at North Carolina State but basically learned on the job. That's where you get most of your education, just doing the things we do day in and day out.

Pay attention to the details, don't shortcut, it may seem small, but a lot of times it's the small things that turn into big problems later down the road. Take your time and learn as much as possible. I was very green when I started, but I had very good people around me, some I worked under and with directly, but others were the contractors we hired to build or rebuild our fields. Pay attention to the things these people do and have you do, you use what you learned from them to build the basics then as you progress you can start to add your own.



» KEN MROCK, Chicago Bears

the chalk board, but the words ring prophetic. There are many legitimate and often competing interests for field use: marketing, corporate sponsorship, private events, third-party event managers, community use, game-day entertainment, other sports team tenants, suppliers and contractors in the sports field industry, television production teams, worthy charitable causes, youth sports promotions, millions of television viewers, in-stadium guests, politicians, all sorts of amateur sports teams, journalists and media (not always the same thing), and many others I've forgot about.

- Yet all this goes through the filter of what's best for the football team, the elite athletes who may never know us, but are depending on me and my turf team. Add to this that you don't book the events, but you answer for the condition of the field, and you better have a good set of what I call play-nice-with-the-other-children skills.

- You must align your mission with the organizational mission. I know of no organi-

zation that employs a sports field manager that has as its mission statement: A perfect field. Sure, it's a key pillar in any successful facility, but we too often take field use too personally, and lose perspective of the larger organizational mission in our focused passion for excellence. In the NFL, there are no individual goals, only team goals. You learn this very quickly.

- Never compromise on player safety. Never.

- You need vey sharp grass-skills. Turfgrass management is a science, and field preparation is somewhat of an art. Science comes from formal education, and art comes from quality experience and lessons learned. On natural grass, a good playing surface starts with healthy grass. How can you keep it healthy if you don't know how it grows and develops? Grass problems identified in early the stages are often easy fixes, but grow more difficult with time. Good turf eyes are needed to see field issues before they become field problems. I could do a whole talk

about this part, and I plan to at the 2011 STMA Conference in Austin.

- You best learn the basics of the event management business. There are so many events on a typical NFL field; you must be involved **early** in the event planning stage. Often, it is how the event and field use are designed that prevent significant damage to the playing surface, while allowing for the necessary event. Who better than I as the professional sports turf manager to predict potential damage, and create ways to conduct events without damage? I found most field users and groups want my participation because they don't want to damage the field, but they just don't know enough about it. I try to remember that for the valued guest, being on the field likely is a very big thrill for them. I want every one of them to say "wow."

- In today's modern stadiums, non-football field uses for revenue, charity, media, and community development are very important parts of the business plan. Again, one must be a team player, and align his/her

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» PUTTING up a goalpost in Denver

You've got to keep up on technology and advancements in the industry. What passed for an "excellent" field in 1984 when I started would probably get me fired today.

goals with that of the organization.

- It sounds cliché, but you will want to have good communication skills. You have to "sell" your program to the powers that be. Most folks don't really understand the ins and outs of sports turf. In other words, they often don't really understand your job. It's no one's fault, but you must be able to educate them to persuade them. You have to describe the key elements of the daily work to the turf team. The work must be done correctly to be effective. You can choke in an interview, or you can take an opportunity to advance the message of your organization.

- You've got to keep up on technology and advancements in the industry. What passed for an "excellent" field in 1984 when I started would probably get me fired today. But that's ok, because we as sports field managers have a seemingly never-ending supply of new ideas, better tools, and new technologies to make us more efficient, and produce higher quality playing surfaces. Back in the day ("when we used to mow with goats" I tell my crew) we could not have imagined the advances we take for granted today. If you're not riding the technology

wave, you'll soon be washed over and left behind in this business.

- While you have to put in the fullest effort, you can't out-work all of your problems. If you try, you'll end up sick.

What specific education and/or work experiences best prepared you for your NFL career? I was formally educated at Colorado State University with a BS in Landscape horticulture/turfgrass management. Yale of the west, I like to say. Every day, I take advantage of, and use my formal education. All of us do, just some more than others. But specifically, I have learned (and often re-learned) how natural grass and soils grow and develop.

I have continually refreshed and reinforced my education through correspondence courses, books, lectures and talks, and other programs. Preparing for the certification exam was a fantastic educational refresher. Today, there are a myriad ways to gain this formal education, and it's more convenient and important than ever. One learns these things from a class or a book, but understands it when they apply it in the field with experience. I cut my teeth on an NFL practice field for 17 years. It's full-out combat turf on an NFL grass practice field! If you can produce there, you can produce anywhere. Since no turf manager's field came with an instruction book, there is no substitute for quality experience. Every sports turf manager should have, or should be working to have, two plaques on their wall: A certificate of formal turfgrass-related education, and a CSFM plaque. I guarantee you will be a better sports turf manager with these two documents in hand.

What words of advice do you have for younger turf managers who aspire to work in the NFL?

Be patient. It takes time to gain the skills and education, and who wants all the responsibility in their youth? Go have fun! There are not that many full-time turf jobs with only 32 franchises in the entire league. However, there are a lot of great jobs, with just as much challenge and reward, as a sports turf manager outside of professional sports facilities. Good sports turf jobs are generally at the facilities that generate high revenue. That's the key. High revenue facilities can be found in parks, schools, municipalities, and universities.

Get your formal education in turfgrass science part done now while you are young, it seems tougher as you get older, and you'll have the foundation to build on with experience.

You should make the most of your time and experiences. Do you just do what you are told to do, or do you try to understand the "why" behind the work? Maybe even try to help with some of the planning? Never, ever be afraid to not know something. Ask and learn. You'll never learn all there is in a lifetime, and no one knows it all anyway. Dive into the unknown and try to learn all the skills needed on your field. If you can mow and paint a perfectly straight line, free-hand paint logos with excellence, understand basic irrigation, and run equipment with several key points of monitor (e.g. a tractor while monitoring the PTO, the equipment lift, ground speed, swath integrity, and the bucket while avoiding irrigation heads), you'll always find work. Keep practicing. Closely watch someone on the team that's highly skilled at a particular job.

Network, network, network. How lucky we are to have the STMA. There is no more open an industry, nor more free exchange