

New Advocacy Manual created especially for sports turf managers

STMA CHAPTERS AND THEIR MEMBERS have been asking for resources on how to address potential regulations affecting sports field management. In response, the association has developed an in-depth 20-page Advocacy Manual that will help all managers deal with community and state governments, proactively and reactively. This members-only resource takes a down-to-earth, easy-to-understand approach to identifying issues, creating relationships with lawmakers, building coalitions, establishing meeting protocols with lawmakers, communicating with the press, and much more.

The STMA Advocacy Manual was created as a complete turnkey tool kit for those involved in sports field management so they could hit the ground running with these best practices in-hand. As stated in the manual, advocacy is "...**any action taken to influence public policy**. It can take many different forms, but the end goal is always to **persuade lawmakers to take actions that are beneficial** to your group or organization. Letter writing, phone calls, in-person visits, media relations, public awareness

campaigns, giving public testimony, conducting and sharing research, and lobbying are all forms of political advocacy."

All well and good, but many people try to persuade lawmakers with little success... how does this resource differ from those that have come before it? According to the manual, the key to successful advocacy is "...the **ability to effectively communicate with lawmakers**, and to be seen by lawmakers as a **trustworthy source of credible information**. After all, who knows more about your industry than you and your colleagues in the Sports Turf Managers Association?"

Some sample sections of the manual include:

- "Identifying Advocacy Priorities"
- Communicating with Lawmakers – Phone calls, letters and emails
- Communicating with Lawmakers – Meetings
- Anatomy of a Lawmaker Meeting
- Communicating with Lawmakers – More ways to build relationships

- Working with Alliances and Coalitions
- Communicating with the Media
- Social Media and Advocacy
- Hiring a Lobbyist

The STMA Advocacy Manual can be found in the "Knowledge Center" (Members Only) under the "Environmental Stewardship" tab.

STMA has also produced a comprehensive list of **Environmental Regulations that Affect Sports Fields** (in the Members Only "Knowledge Center" section under the "Environmental Stewardship" tab) to help sports field managers stay in compliance with their state's requirements. The document includes state/federal laws and regulations covering pesticide and fertilizer licensing/certification, pesticide and fertilizer use, school IPM, integrated pest management, and water use and quality topics. These specific areas were researched and included for their applicability to the management of sports fields.-Shant S. Thomas, STMA Sales & Marketing Manager and STMA staff ■

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Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association: www.vstma.org

Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association: www.wstma.org

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