

FIRE PROTECTION - GOLF CLUB PROPERTIES

By

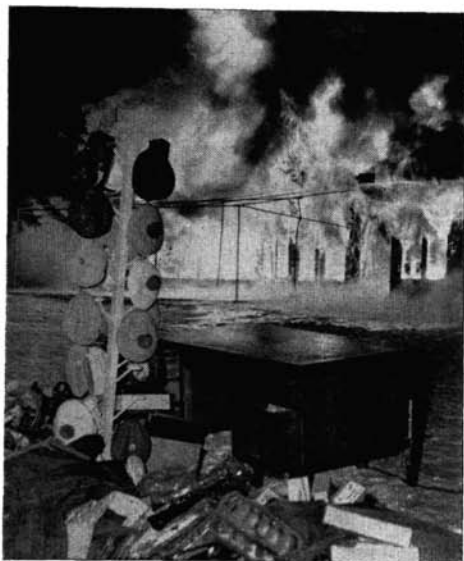
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The deadly march of fire with its destruction of life and property receives only a glance in the passing parade of events. In an ordinary day in the United States, there will be 5,550 outbreaks of fire. Of these, 2,600 will be in buildings and 1,500 in one and two-story homes. Thirty-two lives will be lost to fire each day and the monetary loss, daily, will be three-and-one-half-million dollars. The intangible losses are generally many times the actual physical fire damage to any property.

A survey of over two-hundred fires in Country Club properties, by the National Fire Protection Association, brought forth the following known causes of fire:

| Known Causes | Per Cent |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Electrical Fires | 28.3 |
| Wiring | 21.7 |
| Motors | 3.3 |
| Appliances | 3.3 |
| Smoking and matches | 26.7 |
| Heating equipment fires | 19.2 |
| Overheated or defective equipment | 11.8 |
| Sparks from fireplace | 4.1 |
| Defective chimneys | 3.3 |
| Grease on stove | 7.5 |
| Incendiary, suspicious | 5.9 |
| Sparks on wood shingle roof | 4.1 |
| Lightning | 3.3 |
| Misuse of flammable liquids | 2.5 |
| Miscellaneous known causes | 2.5 |
| | <hr/> 100.0 |

Golf club properties are particularly vulnerable due in many cases to their isolation, lack of water and lack of protection. However, no golf club needs to be destroyed by fire—automatic sprinkler systems are available. Even where the clubhouse is out in the country, beyond city water, it can be protected by a reliable



Salvage from the fire at Flint Country Club, Flint, Mich., which ran to a loss of \$465,000. Fire started either from falling chimney sparks, or from exposed wire which showed signs of shorting.

and effective type of system supplied by a pressure tank. There may be those among the membership who would object to automatic sprinklers on the ceiling. Although pipes on the ceiling are used in industrial plants and warehouses where appearance is not of major importance, in a country club, pipes are always located to be inconspicuous and sprinklers are put at the sides of rooms. If some members object to the artistic effect of automatic sprinklers on the ceiling of the country club, remind them that there isn't anything very sightly about a pile of ashes that was formerly the clubhouse.

Proper fire protection through all the means at our disposal is a MUST but certainly of equal importance is the neces-

RESULTS OF A SMALL GREASE FIRE



Failure of employees to call the fire department for a small grease fire under the hood of a kitchen range was responsible for the destruction of the Westmoreland Country Club, Verona, Pa., in 1950. Visible flames were put out with hand extinguishers, but the fire burned undetected above the kitchen ceiling. The loss was \$384,000.

sity for fire prevention. In the line of fire prevention, the first thing that should be done is to have the Board of Directors appoint one of its members with the responsibility for fire matters. The individual selected should not be one connected with fire insurance, the sale of fire extinguishing equipment or even a fire fan. Let fire matters be settled by a hard-headed member with no axe to grind. This individual can impress the club manager with the fact that the Directors want the club property safeguarded on a day to day basis.

The saying "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" applies to golf club properties.

There should be plenty of ashtrays and good, substantial wastebaskets around the clubhouse. No cigarette ever started a fire by itself—someone was careless. Rubbish and trash serve no useful purpose—they are merely fuel for a fire. Regular arrangements should be made for the collection and disposal of rubbish. Covered metal cans should be provided for rubbish which must be temporarily stored on the premises.

The kitchen can be a danger spot and the kitchen range ventilating system in particular has been the cause of grease fires. Grease fires in a kitchen range ventilating system are a sign of pretty

sloppy operation and these fires are needless. If there is an incinerator located in the property, this should have frequent inspection to see that the breeching into the chimney is tight, that the doors are tight, etc., so that no fires can be caused by this unit.

The janitor's equipment, mops and cleaners, which cause spontaneous combustion, should be kept in proper containers. A metal paint storage locker is needed if paints are kept about the premises.

Electrical wiring and electrical equipment should be subject to fairly frequent inspections—the motors in particular, of which there are always a great many around a clubhouse, can start fires if allowed to get dirty or overloaded.

Heating equipment should receive periodic inspection and clubs should make very sure that the chimneys are tight without regard as to whether they are fireplace chimneys or those used for the kitchen or incinerator. The things enumerated are the causes of many fires but fire prevention should extend to all possible sources that would cause fire damage.

The golf course superintendent naturally worries about the safety of his equipment. Frequently much valuable equipment is housed in quick-burning structures. Consideration should be given to providing non-combustible structures for the storage and use of valuable golf course equipment.

On the course itself, there are a number of specific fire prevention measures which are worth mentioning. One of these concerns the handling of gasoline for tractors and other equipment. The main supply of gasoline should always be kept in an underground tank and dispensed with a standard pump. The distribution of fuel to small power motors and other gasoline-powered equipment should always be by means of flammable liquid safety cans, labeled by Underwriters' Laboratories.

The wiring in sheds on the course should be regularly inspected.

For the clubhouse and other important buildings, a system of lightning rod protection may be needed in many locations. If, on the clubhouse, there is a television aerial of any considerable height, it should have a substantial grounding

down-conductor in order that lightning could be properly grounded.

No rubbish should be allowed to accumulate and paints or other flammables should, as we have previously pointed out, be stored in metal containers. If possible, all fertilizers and chemicals should be stored in a shed other than in the structure used to house trucks, tractors, mowers and power equipment.

Loss of equipment could be very serious, particularly those items that could not be quickly replaced. If the storage and work structures are substantial, any fire prevention measures mentioned in regard to the clubhouse would also apply to these structures. Fire extinguishers should be provided in the clubhouse and equipment barns.

Pre-fire planning should be done and arrangements are needed to attack a fire, particularly if the golf club property is seriously isolated from public fire department protection. Day and night employees should be required to know how to call the fire department, particularly if the department has to be called by telephone.

It is a comparatively simple matter to develop extra sources of water for fire-fighting from streams or ponds, if there is no public water supply available. However, it must be realized that a fire department, to approach a pond or stream with a pumper, must have a road on which the equipment can travel. There is usually a watering system and if some outside hose is kept available, it could help save the property.

Attention to these items can prevent the destruction of golf club property and the terrific loss and inconvenience that would be caused the members.

Remember, fire can destroy both life and property. It can destroy the purchasing power and productivity of employees. It can remove from a taxable, going enterprise on which many people depend for employment and healthful recreation. Your golf club is part of our American way of life—preserve it.

Don't be deluded if someone tells you that this or that is "fireproof." The word "fireproof" is the most abused word in the English language. No building is more fireproof than its contents. The best illustration of this is that a stove is fireproof but built to burn its contents.