

COSTLY FIRES IN GOLF CLUB PROPERTIES

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In the September 1959 issue of the USGA Journal and Turf Management, an article was published under the title "Fire Protection—Golf Club Properties." Reprints of this article were made and distributed to golf clubs throughout America. The writer felt that it would be of interest to golfers, nation-wide, if a survey was made to determine fires reported in Country Club properties since September 1959. In the list that follows, the individual golf clubs and their location are named, after which the aggregate loss is given. Some of the causes of the fires are also outlined in the hope that those responsible for fire safety of golf club properties will take cognizance.

Inverness C. C.	Palatine, Ill.
Henderson C. C.	Henderson, N. C.
Charleston C. C.	Charleston, Ill.
Stanton Heights G. C.	Pittsburgh, Pa.
Ridgeway C. C.	Memphis, Tenn.
Olympia Golf & C. C.	Olympia, Wash.
Alcoma C. C.	Pittsburgh, Pa.
Country Club	Marrysville, Ky.
Goose Creek C. C.	Leesburg, Va.
Orange Hills C. C.	Orange, Conn.
Columbia Edgewater C. C.	Portland, Ore.
South Shore C. C.	New York City (Queensborough)
Plum Hollow G. C.	Southfield, Mich.
Fox Meadow C. C.	Memphis, Tenn.
Ridgeway C. C.	Memphis, Tenn.
Deerpdale G. C.	North Hills, L. I., N. Y.
Valley C. C.	Hazelton, Pa.
Kirksville C. C.	Kirksville, Mo.
Steubenville C. C.	Wintersville, Ohio
Coosa C. C.	Rome, Ga.
Old Lyme C. C.	Old Lyme, Conn.
Municipal G. C. C.	Fairfield, Conn.
C. C. of Fairfield	Fairfield, Conn.
Ashtabula C. C.	Ashtabula, Ohio
C. C. of Little Rock	Little Rock, Ark.
Spencer G. and C. C.	Spencer, Iowa
Greenwich C. C.	Greenwich, Conn.
Haverhill C. C.	Haverhill, Mass.
Natick C. C.	Natick, Mass.

Before discussing the monetary loss in these properties, it should interest you to know that in three of the instances above listed, no dollar loss could be secured despite the fact that in one case the clubhouse property was entirely destroyed.

The actual physical fire damage in dollars involved in the instances listed amounted to \$4,494,450. Understand, this is the actual physical fire damage. Probably if the intangibles were considered, the losses would be at least three or four times this amount.

We call particular attention to the Greenwich Country Club which was destroyed September 5, 1960. Forty-two persons were driven from sleeping quarters when fire destroyed the clubhouse during the early morning hours. Three firemen were injured when a wall of the basement blew out as they were searching for the source of the fire; six other firefighters were overcome by smoke. You can see that in this instance, many precious lives could have been lost. In the Greenwich Country Club were some practically priceless trophies. You can well appreciate that no insurance in the world can pay for the destruction of such valuable artifacts. You can insure against theft and you can insure against fire but there is no replacement of trophies bearing names that are hallowed in tradition.

More and more automatic sprinklers are protecting our heritage in historic buildings, museums and libraries throughout America. As an indication of the foresight and realization that these historical places and treasures cannot be replaced, we name a few of those so protected:

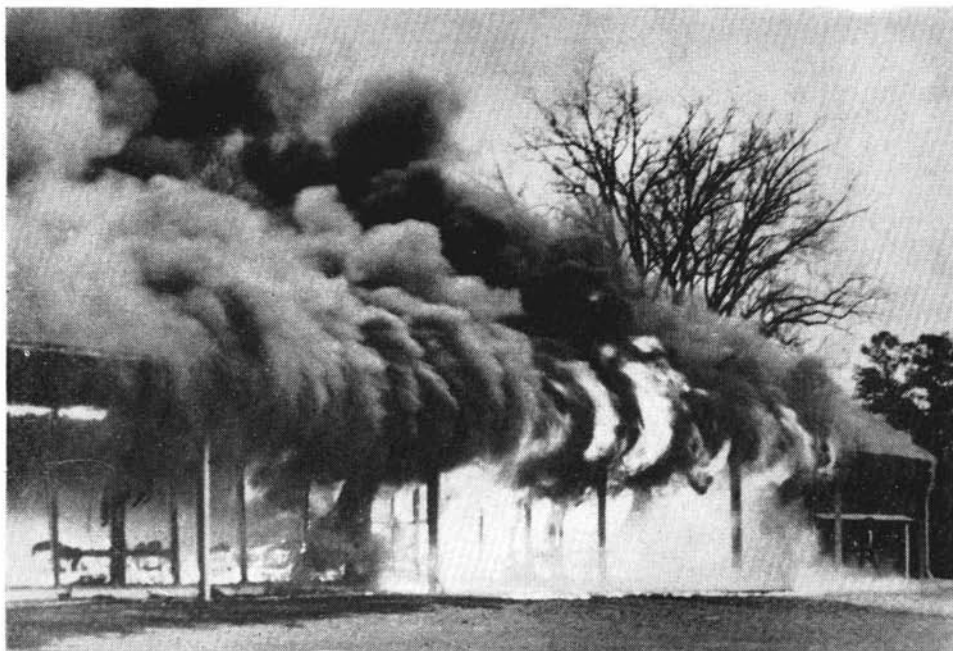
Independence Hall	Philadelphia, Pa.
The Library of Congress	Washington, D. C.
Corecoran Gallery of Art	Washington, D. C.
National Gallery of Art	Washington, D. C.
The Smithsonian Institute	Washington, D. C.
Carnegie Library and Museum	Pittsburgh, Pa.

These are but an important few of the literally hundreds of others.

Country clubs should give serious consideration to the protection of their properties with automatic sprinklers.

There were two fires in one country club, extinguished by automatic sprinklers. In one instance, kitchen rags had been laid on the steampipes around the basement heating boiler and when they became ignited, the fire spread to paper in boxes nearby. The sprinkler system was fed by a 30,000 gallon gravity tank and it operated to extinguish the fire with a loss so negligible that it was not reported. Within less than three months, there was another fire in the same club and this was also extinguished by the automatic sprinkler system with a damage

COOSA COUNTRY CLUB, ROME, GA.



This \$300,000 unsprinklered, one-story, unprotected steel frame building with masonry and glass walls and a pre-cast "Tectum" slab roof had been erected less than a year. The building was essentially non-combustible. Drapes had been flame-proofed but due to the material used (linen, rayon and nylon) had not absorbed sufficient flame-proofing liquid. Several occupants noticed a dried-out Christmas tree in the ball-room, afire, and called the fire department. Meanwhile, the fire had spread to the drapes and when the fire department arrived, fire had spread to the lounge and foyer involving foam rubber and plastic-upholstered furniture.

to the \$325,000 clubhouse of only \$750. In this latter instance, an electric hot plate came in contact with and ignited a tablecloth. The fire was discovered by an employee who promptly telephoned the alarm to the fire department. However, the fire was also detected by the automatic sprinkler system which operated and extinguished the fire before the arrival of the fire department.

In view of the sour record of fires as listed, it is certainly in order to take another look at your fire prevention and fire protection. 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.

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 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, just remind them that there isn't anything very sightly about a pile of ashes that was formerly the clubhouse.

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
	100.0

Proper fire protection through all the

means at our disposal is a MUST but certainly of equal importance is the necessity 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 tem-

COUNTRY CLUB OF FAIRFIELD, CONN.



The fire that practically destroyed this three-story wooden building had been burning more than an hour before discovery by a passing motorist. Originating in the basement, it had spread throughout the first story by the time firemen arrived. The building was protected by a rate-of-rise type automatic fire alarm system but due to the fact that it was not connected to the Fire Department and had no outside alarm, its performance at this crucial time was of no value.

porarily 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.

Fire extinguishers should be provided in the clubhouse and the equipment barns and insofar as the equipment barns are concerned, they should receive the same type of inspection and fire prevention as would the clubhouse. 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.

We cannot over-emphasize the fact that no rubbish should be allowed to accumulate. Pre-fire planning should be done and arrangements are needed to attack the 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, particu-

larly 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, a stream or a swimming pool 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.

Don't be deluded if someone tells you that this or that is "fireproof" whether it applies to interior, exterior, or even decorations. 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.

You can see that in approximately nine months, a tremendous amount of golf club property has been destroyed by fire. It will pay you to heed this warning and not ignore what has happened to other golf club properties—it CAN happen to YOU!

LIGHTNING PROTECTION FOR ELECTRIC CARTS

Electric carts may reasonably be protected against lightning by either of the following two methods suggested by the National Bureau of Standards:

1. A whip antenna, similar to that used on most passenger cars, of a length that will reach above the heads of the riders.

2. A metal top or canopy. Steel-topped automobiles are practically lightning-proof.