

# GO WIRELESS

by **CHUCK GAST**

Agronomist, State of Florida, USGA Green Section

**I**F YOUR DESIRE is to provide your golfers with readily accessible emergency communication equipment, but the thought of plowing a trench through every hidden irrigation control wire and pipe to install a "land-line" system gives you the chills, have I got an idea for you. Go wireless!

The popularity of golf continues to increase year after year. Over 25 million people now participate in this game, which is becoming one of the favorite recreational activities in the country. Unfortunately, along with this increase, golf-related injuries have also increased. A recent survey from the Consumer Products Safety Commission states that nearly 39,000 golf-related injuries resulting in hospital emergency room treatment occur annually in the U.S. Of these, heart attacks and other life-threatening situations are of significance. Furthermore, an additional 6,500 golf-cart-related injuries occur on an annual basis. Therefore, the need to provide fast and efficient emergency communication on today's golf courses is an important issue.

With the use of cellular phone systems and the expanded use of two-way radio systems, the installation of effective emergency communication equipment on the golf course has never been so easy.

At the Woodmont Country Club in Tamarac, Florida, superintendent Willie Townsend is in the process of installing a Motorola two-way radio Medical Alert Call



*The installation of emergency call box systems on golf courses has been streamlined through the use of wireless communications equipment.*

Box System. This system is self-contained and requires only a low-amperage draw of approximately 300-350 milliamps from the power supply of the irrigation system to operate properly. This electrical tie-in to the irrigation system also maintains a full charge on the backup battery pack enclosed within the epoxy-coated stainless steel call box. The radio antenna is hidden safely from view within the PVC enclosure on top of the mounting pole.

Operation of this system is quick and easy, eliminating confusion during a crisis

situation. When the door to a call box is opened, the central receiving station in the clubhouse is automatically signaled to provide the specific location from where the call is being originated. As contact is made with the central receiving station, the caller simply presses the talk button to describe the nature of the emergency through the microphone / speaker mounted in the call box. The operator of the central receiving station can then notify the appropriate emergency personnel and, when the emergency unit arrives at the clubhouse, this person can provide specific directions to the location on the course where assistance is needed.

These particular call boxes also can be locked at night to prevent vandalism. At early dawn's light the next morning, each box should be unlocked to allow operation should an emergency arise.

As can be imagined, the versatility of this

type of communication system through differing frequencies is virtually limitless and could be adapted to various areas of the clubhouse and pro shop operations.

At the Frenchmans Creek Yacht and Country Club, in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, this very idea has been expanded upon. Mr. David Holler, CGCS, has in place emergency call boxes in strategic locations on approximately every other hole throughout the 36-hole complex. In addition to providing a direct line to the security office for emergency situations, four boxes located on





*Dave Blasiman, assistant superintendent at Frenchmans Creek Yacht & Country Club, demonstrates the use of this solar-powered, multiple-use emergency/halfway house call box system.*

the eighth and 17th holes of both the North and South Courses have an additional button to provide communication to the halfway house to allow for a quick snack at the turn.

As pointed out by Mr. Dave Blasiman, assistant superintendent at Frenchmans Creek, each box is numbered for identification purposes. However, similar to the previous system, each box is automatically identified at the central receiving station when the door to the unit is opened.

This particular equipment, manufactured by GTE (813-273-3000), is in fact a solar-powered cellular phone system. Each call box unit is fully self-contained and, due to solar power, requires no electrical tie-in to an outside source. Therefore, these units can be placed virtually anywhere on the golf course where sunlight is not obscured. Each unit also contains an enclosed battery pack that maintains a full charge from the solar collectors to provide supplemental power during extended periods of low sunlight exposure.

To ensure consistent operation, each unit at Frenchmans Creek sends out a status report once per week to verify proper operation and battery levels. Should a battery become weak, a default system kicks in to notify the central unit of the situation. According to the installer of this system, only one battery pack has had to be replaced in the 18 units since installation of the system in the fall of 1992.

The whole concept of this type of wireless emergency communication system is tremendous and the versatility is unlimited. For example, the possibility of utilizing this equipment to interface with early warning lightning detection systems also exists. The ability to add horns or sirens on call box stations in strategic areas throughout the course to provide warning of dangerous weather conditions can further add to the safety of golfers.

As the popularity of golf continues to increase, the number of hours people spend on the course in pursuit of this pastime will also increase. Without question, the primary consideration of any successful golf course operation should be to provide the best possible emergency communication network to assist in providing optimum safety on the golf course. Although the expense of these golf course "extras" can be significant, what dollar value can be placed on the health and safety of the golfers who use the course?

Considering the dependability of this emergency communication, there should be no more excuses. Installation is easy and painless, and operation of the equipment is simple. Swing smoothly, rest easy, and go wireless.

---

# Armchair Architect

---

by **PATRICK J. GROSS**

Agronomist, Western Region, USGA Green Section

**K**EEPING the golf course open for play during an extensive renovation project can be a difficult and challenging experience. Bill Martin, CGCS, of the Victoria Golf Club in Riverside, California, was faced with such a challenge when his proposal to renovate the fairways and plant hybrid bermudagrass was accepted by the membership. The only condition was that the board of directors demanded that the course be kept open for play during the entire renovation process.

The solution was to renovate nine fairways at a time and design an 18-hole course using the remaining nine holes. This is how this innovative idea was put into action.

Members would play two nine-hole rounds from different tees to different holes on the greens. White tee markers and flags were used for the first nine, and blue tee markers and flags for the second nine. The forward tees were designed using red markers and red stones. The different tee locations provided a different yardage each time the

hole was played and generally required different club selections. By using alternate tee locations, it was also possible to change the angle of approach to some greens. For example, hole No. 3 played as a dogleg right from the regular tees. On the second nine, this same hole played as a dogleg left by using the championship tee from an adjoining hole.

Placing two holes in each green made it possible to provide different putting characteristics each time the hole was played. The