

MINIMUM MAINTENANCE –

SPORT FIELD TURFGRASS

SHOP SUPERVISOR'S NOTEBOOK



- **Health and Safety of employees and the public! - #1 Goal**
 - Maintain social distancing guidelines
 - Hand sanitizer, disinfectant within location and establish cleaning procedures
 - Fast pace change – Federal, State, Local, Executive orders – Stay informed!
- **Communication is essential!**
 - Post signage around your facility and take proactive steps to help keep people safe
 - Develop maintenance contingencies for operations during and post-recovery
- **Staff Adjustments**
 - Relocate team meetings
 - Assign one vehicle/equipment per person
 - Breaks or lunch in open areas and six feet apart or staggered
 - Wipe down equipment after usage
 - Split shifts or different work hours to reduce staff contact



- Why is minimal maintenance needed for turfgrass?
 - Turfgrass is a living breathing organism
 - Neglect will have a negative impact on plant health
 - Cannot flip a switch and have it back to “game ready” conditions
 - Proper attention now will minimize the transition time back
 - The level of “regular” maintenance correlates to:
 - Growing climate
 - Expected conditions at your facility
 - Stakeholder management



Minimum Maintenance – Growth Control

- Mowing is needed to reduce the potential of weed encroachment
- Mowing frequencies will vary based on playing surface
 - High level maintenance surfaces (pre-Covid 19) that required four to five mowing a week – minimum maintenance target would be two to three times per week
 - Baseball, soccer, football, lacrosse fields
 - Medium level maintenance surfaces (pre-Covid 19) that required three to four mowing a week – minimum maintenance target would be one to two times per week
 - Active turfgrass areas
 - All other surfaces should target minimum maintenance on one or two weeks
- Plant Growth Regulators (PGR's) can be utilized to manage growth rate
 - 1st time use awareness
- Raising the height of cut should reduce the amount of top growth
 - Assist with increasing the time period between mowing frequencies
 - Following the 1/3rd rule at higher HOC will prolong the time between cuttings

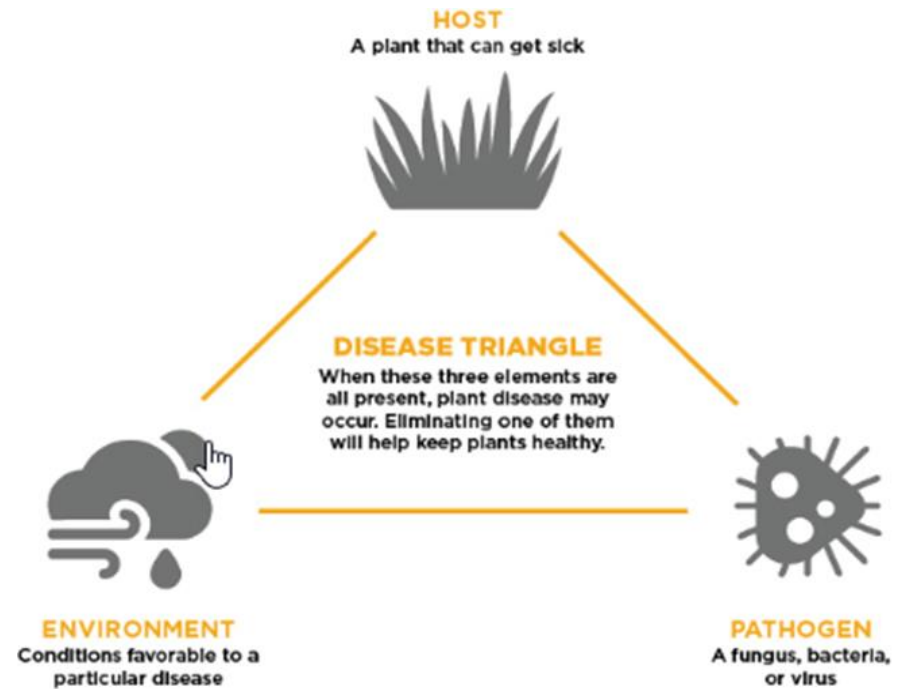
Minimum Maintenance – Irrigation

- Different cultivars need different amounts!
 - Irrigation should be managed to ensure adequate turf health and density, but not to push lush growth
- Precision irrigation is recommended
 - Sensors can assist to understanding wilting point and field capacity
 - Cloud based systems can be managed remotely
- Irrigation systems need to be maintained (pump stations, satellites, etc.)

Suggested Action – Conduct an Irrigation System Audit

- Perform an audit of your system with a Catch Can Test
 - Provide a measurement of system uniformity
 - Generally good uniformity is indicated by a Scheduling Coefficient of 1.5 or less however today's systems are 1.2 or below
 - Distribution uniformities of 80% or more are considered acceptable

- Being a living organism, turfgrass is susceptible to weed, insects and diseases that can decimate a turfgrass during the growing season
 - Understand the elements and conditions that make the plant susceptible
 - Avoid using products that encourage additional unnecessary plant growth
 - Site inspections should be a part of minimal maintenance



Baseball Infield Maintenance

- Very minimal maintenance should be done on infield skin areas
 - Leveling and scarifying of the surface should be done once a week to prevent weed encroachment
 - Barriers installed to impede the migration of infield material into unwanted areas from rain and wind events.
 - Warning tracks should follow infield schedule

Leveling

- Opportunity to level bases and mounds on fields



Maximize Maintenance Efficiencies

- Routine maintenance on essential equipment
 - Stock additional high-level maintenance parts – Potential supply chain disruptions
 - Develop delivery safety / disinfecting protocols
- Custodial procedures
 - Streamline sanitation protocols
 - Investigate alternative options (promote carry-in / carry-out)
 - Increase frequency of restroom cleaning (if providing public access)
- Play Areas
 - Discourage playground use through improved access to open areas and trails
- Landscaping Beds
 - Weed control barriers and mulching options
 - Sustainability opportunities – indigenous ground covers and native species



- Agile thinking is needed in a future of changing norms

Questions to Ponder

- How will your maintenance practices change post Covid-19?
 - Use of facilities
 - Maintenance priorities
 - Staffing
 - Stakeholder management



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