



## FOG ON THE COURSE

Ray Burniston suggests what can be done when there is fog on the golf course.

Secretary At Work: October 2000 *(reviewed October 2011)*

### Can we play?

This question is often posed by members and visitors when they arrive at their club to find it covered by fog. Any decision to close the course should be taken by officials who are given that responsibility. In most cases it may well be the Secretary/Manager who will be the person to decide whether to allow play or not. They should be given clear instructions from the committee/proprietors on the procedures to follow.

The following notes are a guideline for secretaries and are not intended other than that, it is up to each club to set their own rules.

### Organised Competitions

Firstly if the club has a competition arranged with starting times then a decision will have to be made on grounds of safety and also on whether under the conditions it would be sensible to start or continue the competition. If the competition has not started then a decision could be made to delay the start until conditions improve. This will mean that all starting times will have to be put back to allow for the delay.

A firm decision will have to be made. You should not say members can play in the competition if they wish.

Some courses are notorious for early morning fog which will soon be dispersed when the sun starts burning it off. This often is the case at Wentworth in the autumn when the Match Play Tournament is being played and an hour's delay is often required. Experience at your club will tell you whether this is likely to happen or that the fog may last all day. You should probably have a time limit after which the competition will be abandoned or postponed.

The same policy should be made for visiting parties or societies and it is up to the club management to decide whether they can play or not.

Should fog develop whilst play is in progress then the officials in charge should decide whether to abandon play and a klaxon used to warn players. In the case of friendly/social golf play should not be permitted unless there is enough visibility to ensure the safety of those playing and any public or onlookers.

If it is felt that it would be dangerous for golfers to play because of poor visibility then a firm decision should be made and the Course closed until conditions improve.

## **Public Footpaths/Common Land**

If your course has numerous public footpaths running across the golf course then you must take this into consideration when making a decision. If your course is built on common land then you should not attempt to play unless visibility is good.

## **Staff**

In the case of staff working on the course in these conditions then firm guidelines must be set as you have a duty of care to your staff.

If the golfer cannot see that the way ahead is clear to play their next shot, then they should not play.

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