



# Parks and Open Space Management

*Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association Inc.*

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## Turf Restoration Handbook





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## Introduction and Disclaimer of Liability for Use of the Document

This Parks and Open Space Management Handbook, provides a description of procedures associated with maintenance activities performed within park settings.

The concept of maintenance standards requires the application of best practices within the local operation system. To assist with the establishment of such standards, this resource provides guidelines to aid staff in addressing their daily management operations. There are, however, situations where the standards outlined may require revision by those staff implementing the procedure, to best meet their needs. Specific site conditions, operating budgets, available human resources, and capacity to offer training associated with the practices outlined in this document may warrant alterations to the procedures.

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## Acknowledgments

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## Turf Restoration Introduction

“Mister,” came from a small voice behind me, “Why are you throwing that dirt on the grass?”

Before even turning around I guessed to myself that it was the young boy I had seen playing on the slide a few yards from where we were working. We had caught his eye the minute we drove up



onto the grass and he had been watching us intently. “My mom says that the dirt belongs in the flowerbeds.” I chuckled to myself as I turned around to see that it was the boy I suspected. “What’s your name son?” I asked. “Robert” he said, as he took a few more steps closer. I glanced over at his mother who was not far away, enjoying some afternoon sun on the swings, with Robert’s baby sister. She called to Robert not to bother us but I waved to her and said he was fine.

“Well, tell me why you are throwing dirt on the grass?” Robert asked with authority. I had children myself and I knew that he was in the ‘why’ stage of his life. I smiled at him and told him I would do better than that, I would show him why.





I began to walk around the area that we were top dressing and Robert followed. I explained to him the park had recently had irrigation installed and the ground was still settling where the pipes had been dug in. The crew was restoring and leveling the grass so children wouldn't fall and hurt themselves while they ran and played in the park. That's why we add a layer of soil mixture and grass seed to certain areas.

By the time I was done giving Robert an explanation, my co-workers had the area prepared and Robert was able to lend a hand in helping us spread the grass seed. He was thrilled that he was able to help. We began to load up our equipment and Robert ran over to his mother. I could hear him telling his mother about top dressing and as I pulled away from the site I heard him exclaim, "You can throw dirt on the grass mom!"



## Turf Restoration Overview

Turf restoration is when you have an area that has sunken or been damaged. By adding a special soil mixture and some grass seed you level out the bumps and hollows in the uneven areas and at the same time encourage new growth. The ground may have become sunken for a number of different reasons such as: decaying tree stumps, recently installed pipes for irrigation; even winter freezing and thawing will cause the ground to settle in a particular spot and will require some turf restoration.



In the larger, more established parks, the crew is able to drive the truck right on site, but in smaller parks, use the Turf Truck or possibly a wheelbarrow to carry the soil mixture and equipment.

### ***Material and Tools Required to Perform Turf Restoration***

- Soil Mix
- Grass Seed
- Landscape Rakes
- Shovel





# Your Day Begins...







## Safety Equipment Overview

From your past experience you know the importance of wearing the correct clothing and safety equipment. You recall the standard safety gear used by Parks and Open Space Management workers.

As well, you know there are a number of pieces of safety equipment required when using the Turf Truck and other equipment.

### Safety Gear

	Hard Hat - Recommended <i>(never worn backwards or over another hat)</i>
	Safety Vest - Required <i>(wear on all roadways)</i>
	CSA Approved Safety Boots - Required
	Work Gloves - Recommended
	Safety Glasses - Recommended
	Ear Plugs - Recommended





## Steps to Restoring Turf

Here are the steps you follow when performing turf restoration:

1. Prepare the site by raking and removing any loose dirt lumps, rocks, and twigs.

2. Fill in the area with the soil mixture using a shovel. If the area is large enough, you may dump the soil mixture directly from the Turf Truck or wheelbarrow.



3. Pack down the newly added soil mix using your feet.





## Steps to Restoring Turf Continued...

4. To give the ground a more natural appearance, feather the soil mix into the surrounding grass using your rake. You can use the back of the rake to level any uneven soil.



5. On smaller areas sprinkle the grass seed by hand and on the larger areas use a hand broad caster and apply a light, even seed cover.





## ***Steps to Restoring Turf Continued...***

6. Rake the seed lightly into the top ¼" of soil.  
This will help keep the seed from being blown away in the wind.



### **Safety First!**

When you set a rake down,  
make sure that the teeth  
are pointed towards the ground  
just in case someone steps on it.





## At the End of the Day

At the end of the day your thoughts go back to the little boy you met this afternoon while you were top dressing some areas. Once again you chuckle to yourself when you think about the dirt belonging in the flowerbeds and not on grass.

You also learnt from Robert that he had just moved to the area and it was his first time at the park...a smile plays on your lips...you are certain it won't be his last.





# Turf Restoration – Job Aid

## Turf Truck Maintenance and Operation

### Maintenance

- Check the oil level daily and make sure it's full.
- Check the fuel level and ensure it's full.
- Check to see if the air filters are clean. Tap it lightly against a hard surface to remove any dust.

### Operation

- When starting the vehicle ensure the vehicle is in neutral with the park brake on.
- Never leave the keys in an unattended vehicle.
- Never leave the Turf Truck unattended.





## Task:

To maintain park and city spaces by restoring turf in areas where the ground is sunken or bare.

## Tools and Equipment:

- Turf Truck or Wheelbarrow
- Soil Mix, Grass Seed
- Landscape Rakes, Shovel

## Safety Gear Required:

- Leather gloves
- Safety footwear

## Procedural Tips for Turf Restoration:

- Prepare the site by removing any loose dirt lumps, rocks and twigs.
- Fill in the area with the soil mixture using a shovel. If the area is large enough, you may dump the soil mixture directly from the wheelbarrow or Turf Truck.
- Pack down the soil with your feet.
- Give the ground a more natural appearance by feathering the soil into the surrounding grass using your rake.
- If it is a smaller area, distribute the grass seed by hand and if it is a larger area use a hand-held broadcaster and apply a light, even seed cover.
- Rake the seed lightly into the top ¼” of soil to help ensure the grass seed won’t be blown away by the wind.

**Remember:** For safety’s sake, if you set the rake down ensure the teeth are turned towards the ground.

