

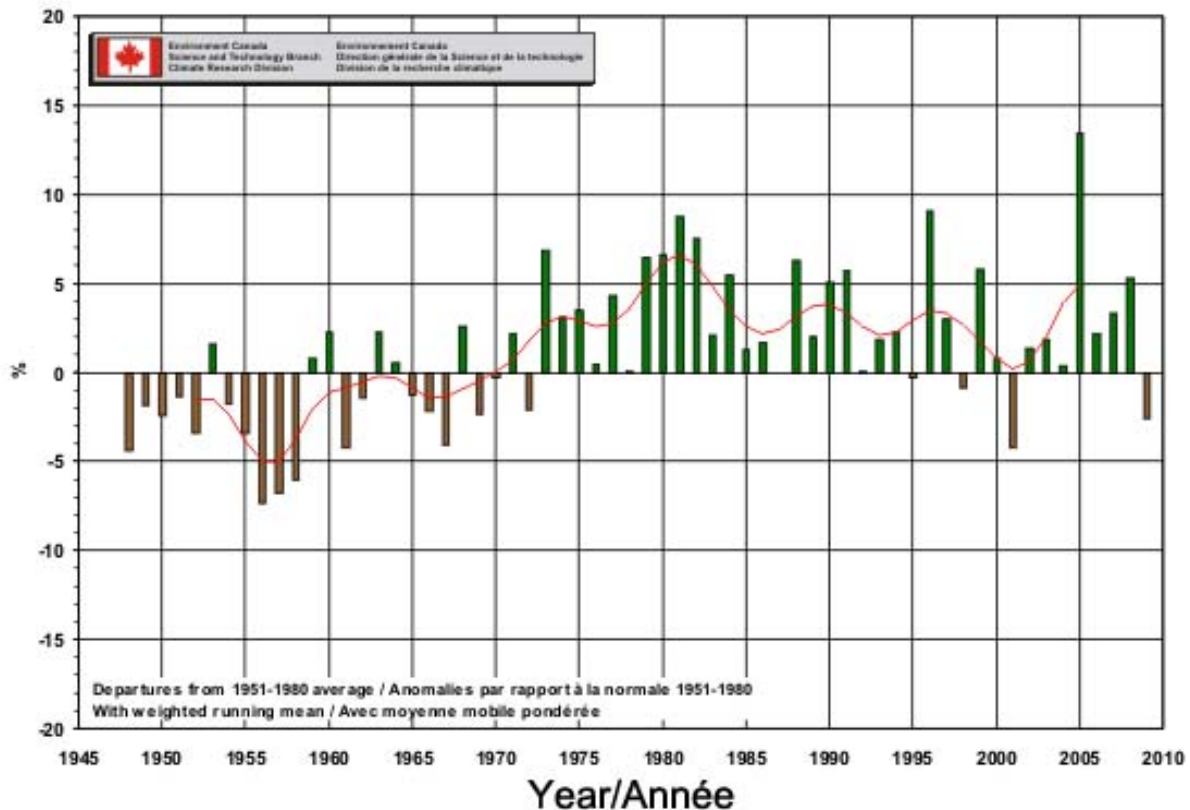
Signature Golf Information Centre

The Rising Tide of Water Damage: When it Rains, it Pours

Water damage and flooding are one of the most serious risks that golf courses face. Recent research has shown that claims related to water damage account for 5% of all claims made by golf courses and this number appears to be growing.

There are several reasons for the expected increase in water related claims. For starters most regions of Canada have experienced a significant increase in precipitation over the last 30 years. In 2009, several parts of Canada were at least 20% wetter than normal, including areas of Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes.

For a better understanding of the increase in recent precipitation levels we have attached a chart from Environment Canada which highlights just how wet it has been.

Annual National Precipitation departures with Weighted Running Mean, 1948 - 2009

source: Environment Canada www.ec.gc.ca

As you can see, the annual precipitation levels have been well above average since the early 1970s and we should expect that this trend will increase. Here are some key data points from the above chart:

- The 1980s was the wettest decade during the Period followed by the 1990s
- The 2000s were 2.2% above normal
- The wettest year since 1948 was recorded in 2005

Traditional Water Damage Losses

In addition to this dramatic increase in annual precipitation levels there are also several other causes of water damage. The most obvious claims tend to stem from burst pipes, leaky appliances and backed-up sewers however unpredictable and increasingly violent rain storms and aging infrastructure, both at your club and your municipality, are also a growing cause for concern.

It should also be noted that it is not just golf courses in and around flood plains that need to be aware. Limited or no proximity to water does not protect your facility from a water related accident. All golf clubs are at risk and you must take the time now to ensure that you are protected.

We would also like to point out that water related losses can happen during the fall and winter months. Extreme cold temperatures can lead to burst plumbing pipes inside the clubhouse and it is important to remember that sprinkler systems are not immune from freezing.

What are the Risks?

Golf courses are extremely vulnerable to the damage that can be inflicted by water. Inside the clubhouse, burst water pipes and leaky appliances are a constant threat but it is the risk to the golf course grounds that is largely discounted. Owners and operators must constantly be aware of the losses that can result from a severe weather storm such as washing out of sand traps, carried debris and complete fairway washouts that can leave a course unplayable for extended periods and saddled with substantial clean up related costs.

As you walk your facility you and your staff must constantly be thinking about the risk of rising water levels. Regular monitoring of creeks, streams, rivers and ponds as well as careful consideration during golf course renovations and improvements are your best defense against future claims.

How Can I Protect My Club?

There are some obvious culprits both inside and outside the clubhouse that must be inspected regularly including;

Inside the Clubhouse

1. Replacement of aged plumbing infrastructure
2. Back-flow sewer valves must be installed and serviced regularly
3. Install an alarm system that will shut off the main water flow when a leak is detected
4. Roots of mature trees can damage sewer and water lines

5. Basement foundations must be inspected annually to check for cracks and leaks
6. Water heaters must be replaced and inspected annually
7. Annually inspect the roof for leaks and missing shingles

On the Golf Course

1. Regularly inspect the golf course grounds
2. Check riverbanks - refurbish any areas that have eroded or been damaged by ice flows
3. Bridge armoring
4. Monitor existing run-off on all greens and tees

What to do When You Have a Flood

Within minutes of water intrusion, damage can begin. Thus, prompt action is important following a water-related disaster or accident. The speed with which you take action to begin the water damage restoration process will determine how much can be salvaged. Unwelcome moisture not only ruins carpeting and stains floors, ceilings and walls, but if left uncorrected can rapidly diminish the value of the property.

One of the biggest problems caused due to water damage is molding. Mold formation is the greatest setback most people face when dealing with water damage and molding can spoil possessions and cause health related problems including allergic reactions such as asthma, non-allergic reactions such as headaches, as well as lung and breathing infections.

The Risk Management Plan at your club must include information on how to shut off electrical power and natural gas sources and identify a safe meeting place that is outside of the flood risk area.

Useful Links

Ministry of Natural Resources	www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/EmergencyManagement
Environment Canada	www.ec.gc.ca
Insurance Bureau of Canada	www.abc.ca

For More Information

To locate an authorized **Signature Golf Insurance Specialist** in your area or for more information please contact us at:

www.signaturerisk.com

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