



# 101 Critical Days of Summer



## Safety Tip #13 – Lawn Mower

### Safety

Lawn mowing season seems to be the season for accidents caused while operating power lawn mowers. During the entire summer, you can read story after story about someone losing a toe, a foot, a finger or hand, or having more severe injuries while operating a power lawn mower.

The power lawn mower is one of the most dangerous tools around the home. Each year, about 200,000 people (including 16,000 children) are injured in lawn mower-related accidents, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Older children and adolescents were most often hurt while cutting lawns as chores or as a way to earn money. Those injuries include severed fingers, toes and limbs, broken bones, eye damage and burns.

Accidents are a serious problem, and manufacturers have done considerable research and made improvements as their contribution to eliminate lawn mower accidents. Regardless of this effort to solve the problem, one fact stands out: More than 90 percent of the accidents are traceable to lack of knowledge on the part of the user or simply carelessness on the part of the user.

Manufacturers' wage a two-pronged attack on the mower accident problem: they strive to add safety features to their equipment, and they try to educate you, the consumers, in safety handling or the equipment.

Here are a few tips to help make mowing safer for you and those around you.....

#### **Safety for Electric Mowers**

Use only recommended, grounded extension cords.

Mow away from the cord.

Never abuse the cord or use a frayed cord.

Always turn off the mower when you leave it and unplug the cord directly from the outlet; never unplug by yanking the cord from the wall.

Never use an electric mower when wet or raining. Always use a ground fault circuit interrupter to prevent electric shock.



#### **Safety for Walk-Behind Mowers**

Do not put your hands or feet near or under the mower.

Never tilt a walk-behind mower; always keep all four wheels on the ground.

Do not pull the mower backwards unless absolutely necessary. Always look down and behind before and while mowing backwards.

#### **Safety for All Mowers**

Be sure to completely read the safety information contained in the operator's manual.

Tragic accidents can occur with children.

Do not allow children anywhere near the area of operation.

Children are often attracted to the unit and mowing activity. Never assume that children will remain where you last saw them.

If there is a risk that children may enter the area where you are mowing, have another responsible adult watch them.

The blades on mowers spin very fast and can pick up and throw debris that could seriously injure a bystander.

BE sure to clean up the area to be mowed before you start mowing.

Do not operate a lawnmower with the discharge guard (reflector) or engine grass catcher installed.

The Mower Deck has spinning mowers blades that can amputate hands and feet.

Do not allow anyone near the mower while it is running.

Always allow the mower blade(s) to stop completely before leaving the mower's operator position.

Always turn off mower when crossing a sidewalk or a driveway.

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgery and the American Academy of Pediatrics both recommend that children not operate a lawn mower until they are 16 years old.

## Safety For Riding Mowers

Do not give children rides on a riding mower, even with the mower blades not turning.

Children may fall off and be badly injured or interfere with safe machine operation.

Children who have been given rides in the past may suddenly appear in the mowing area for another ride and be run over or backed over by the machine.

Do not mow with a riding mower in reverse unless absolutely necessary.

You can be seriously injured or even killed if you use a riding mower on too steep an incline.

Using a riding mower on a slope that is too steep, or where you don't have adequate traction can cause you to lose control or roll over.

Always consult your operator's manual for safety messages concerning operation on a slope.

## Handling Gasoline

Never smoke when filling the gas tank.

Store gasoline in a container with a UL, FM, or CSA label.

Never keep gasoline in the house or fill gas tank indoors.

Never store the machine or fuel container where there is an open flame, spark, or pilot light such as near a water heater or other appliances.

Never fill containers inside a vehicle or on a truck bed with a plastic bed liner. Always place containers on the ground away from your vehicle before filling.

Wipe up gasoline spills immediately and do not attempt to start the engine but move the machine away from the area of spillage and avoid creating any source of ignition until fuel vapors have dissipated.

Never over-fill the fuel tank. Replace gas cap and tighten securely.

Never remove the gas cap or add fuel with the engine running. Allow the engine to cool before refueling.



## Preparing to Mow

Before you mow, pick up objects lying on the lawn. Toys, tools, tires, car parts, cans, bottles, rocks, sticks, twigs, and limbs are hazards to children playing on the lawn even when a mower is not operating. These items also present great danger to the operator, bystanders, and the mower when mowing begins.

## Dressing Safely for Mowing

Clothing protects the mower operator from thrown objects and sun exposure. Earplugs protect hearing from the engine's and blades' loud noises. Safety glasses or goggles protect the eyes from dust, dirt, trash, and small rocks thrown by the blade and the engine-cooling fan.

Never wear anything that can be caught in the machine such as loose clothing or jewelry. Always tie back long hair. Following is a checklist of appropriate clothes and supplies to use to protect yourself while mowing:

- Long pants
- Close-fitting clothes
- Sturdy shoes
- Safety glasses
- Sun protection
- Earplugs or muffs



Here are a couple of sites to mow through when you get a chance.....

Lawn Mower Safety Training...

<http://ehs.okstate.edu/modules/mower/intro.htm>

Agricultural/Industrial Mower Safety...

[http://www.nasdonline.org/menu/topic/machinery\\_mowers.html](http://www.nasdonline.org/menu/topic/machinery_mowers.html)

**I always thought a yard was three feet, then, I started mowing the lawn. ~C.E. Cowman**

**Be Safe Out There - Your Risk Management Staff**



**This document was derived from multiple sources. Sources are available upon request in the 157 ARW/SE Office.**