



Loss Control Insight

Lawnmower Safety

Each year many mishaps and accidents occur as a result of misuse of lawnmowers. Cuts and amputations caused by spinning blades, eye injuries from flying debris and stones and burns from fuel explosion, and electric shock are the most common injuries.

Here are some safety tips to help keep you safe while using an electric mower or gas mower.

- Before using a lawn mower, clear all debris, rocks, twigs and toys from the lawn.
- Keep a firm grip on the handle with both hands at all times.
- Never over-reach while operating a mower; it's important to keep your balance at all times.
- Be especially careful when mowing on sloping ground where you have less control. Mow across the fall of the slope, never up and down.
- Never operate a lawn mower if you are barefoot or while wearing sandals. Always wear safety-toed shoes; they could save your foot if it slips under the cutting blade.
- It's much safer to cut the grass while walking forward, keeping the mower ahead of you, rather than pulling it backward toward you.
- As a precaution, keep all bystanders at a safe distance and never allow children to operate a mower. Do not give anyone a ride if you are using a riding mower.
- Never leave a running mower unattended.
- Make sure to remove the spark plug before cleaning the mower housing and before making any repairs or inspections. Turning the blade is extremely dangerous; it can have the same effect as pulling the start cord. Remember; although an engine has been shut off, even a slight movement of the blade can re-start the engine.
- If you have an electric mower, unplug the power cord before inspecting or cleaning it. You could be seriously injured if you try to make repairs to live electrical components in your mower.
- Never remove clippings from the underside of your mower with your hands. Use a long handled scraper.
- Perhaps you are considering an old-fashioned push mower as an environmentally friendly, cheaper and possibly safer alternative to the power mower — one which will provide some exercise. Keep in mind this type of mower also has its hazards, such as unguarded blades. Be careful with any mower you choose to use.
- Know how to stop the equipment instantly in an emergency. The equipment must be adjusted correctly so moving parts stop when the motor is idling.
- Before making adjustments, turn the equipment off and ensure it cannot accidentally start up by removing the spark plug or unplugging it from the electrical outlet.
- Keep equipment guards in place.
- Use an approved power cord with the correct capacity and insulation for outdoor electrical equipment. Plug into an outlet protected by a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter. Never remove the third prong from a cord.
- Be aware of fire and explosion hazards associated with gasoline and propane powered equipment. Fill the gasoline tank before you start a job, and check the oil while you're at it. If you have to refuel in the middle of a job, allow the equipment to cool first. Store fuel in approved containers, properly labeled. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby. Never fuel while you are smoking or near open flame or another source

of ignition. Don't spill fuel on the equipment. If a spill happens, wipe it up and allow the spot to dry before you try to start the engine.

- When gasoline and propane are burned as fuel, they create deadly carbon monoxide gas, so machinery must not be operated indoors or in confined spaces.
- Stand up straight to push a mower, to avoid back strain. Maintain good footing so you don't fall into the path of the equipment. Travel slowly across the slope with a push mower, and drive slowly straight up and down a slope on a riding mower. Avoid sharp turns.
- Never reach into a the machine to unclog material while it is running. This may seem like common sense, but many people each year lose their fingers doing just that.

Don't forget the right Personal Protective Equipment, including safety toed footwear and impact resistant safety eyewear, and a hardhat as needed for overhead hazards. You'll need hearing protection when running noisy machines such as mowers or snow blowers. While leather gloves or padded anti-vibration gloves may be needed for certain jobs, they should not be used where there is a danger of entanglement in rotating equipment. Likewise, avoid loose clothing which can get tangled.

As always ~ Be Safe