

Lawnmower Safety

Each year, approximately 75,000 people are injured seriously enough by lawnmowers to require emergency room medical treatment. Only a small percentage of the injuries are caused by mechanical failure; most are the result of human error.

Here are some tips to follow before and while mowing your lawn:

Become familiar with your mower.

Read the owner's manual before using the mower for the first time. Note all safety and operating instructions. Learn the controls well enough to act instantly in an emergency and to stop the machine quickly.

Proper clothing is essential to protect your body from harm.

Always wear non-slip shoes instead of tennis shoes or sandals. Steel-toe safety footwear offers the most protection against the blade. Long pants help protect your legs from objects that may be thrown from under the mower. Use ear plugs to prevent hearing loss caused by exposure to the high noise levels.

Never leave a mower running unattended.

A mower left running unattended can be fascinating to a child. If the mower has an electric start, the key should never be left in the ignition.

Always start the mower outdoors.

Never operate a mower where carbon monoxide can collect, such as in a closed garage, storage shed or basement.

Police the area.

Before you start mowing, be sure the lawn is free of tree limbs, rocks, wires and other debris, which can get caught up in the blades.

The main source of danger is the blade.

To perform its task efficiently, the mower blade must be sharp and travel at a high speed. If a hand or foot gets under the mower while the engine is running, it can cause serious injury. Never attempt to unclog or work on a lawnmower while the engine is on.

Disconnect the sparkplug wire.

Any time it is necessary to reach under the mower, disconnect the spark plug wire to insure that the engine cannot start. It takes a little extra time, but not as long as it does to recover from a serious injury.

Check for frayed or cut wiring.

When using an electric lawnmower, wires can easily get cut by the blade. Keep an eye on the wiring as you move the mower and check for frayed or cut wiring every time you mow.