



General Mower Safety

Toolbox Talk Lesson Plan

Mowers are the most common type of lawn care equipment. To avoid injury with power mowers, you must pay close attention to your surroundings. The whirling metal piece below the mower deck is an inexpensive and effective method of shearing a variety of vegetation. However, approximately **70 percent of all lawn mower accidents are caused by blade contact**. A person can come in contact with the blade by slipping under the mower deck, or reaching into the discharge chute. Lawn mower blades typically turn at 3,600 revolutions per minute or **50 revolutions per second**. Since the blade has two cutting edges, an object in line with the blade for only one second can be struck as many as **120 times**. Follow these guidelines for lawn mower safety:

- Only qualified / authorized operators should use equipment. **Describe your dept. training.**
- **Conduct a pre-mowing inspection** of the lawn & remove any debris that could become a projectile. Debris can be hurled over 50 feet at **170 miles per hour**. Look for concealed hazards such as holes.
- **Wear eye protection** and hearing protection.
- Keep hands and feet away from moving blades. Use Lock Out / Tag Out when needed.
- Fill the tank with gas before beginning work. (By filling the tank initially, you can avoid having to fill the tank later when it is hot.) Transport gasoline only in approved safety cans.
- **Never leave a lawn mower running unattended.**
- **Shut off the engine before unclogging**, servicing, or adjusting the mower and before removing the grass bag. For added protection, remove the ignition wire before working on the machine.

Riding Lawn Mowers Follow these addition guidelines for riding lawn mower safety:

- Before starting the engine, make sure the transmission is out of gear and the mower blade clutch is disengaged. Discharge chute flap must be in the down position.
- Test all safety switches before using mower. If switch is inoperable or by-passed – Do Not Use.
- Move all ROPS devices to the deployed (up) position (Overturns account for 50% of fatalities)
- If a ROPS is present, seat belts **MUST** be used to keep you in the seat.
- **Never allow extra riders** on the lawn mower.
- **Slow down when turning** & when working on slopes. Mow up & down slopes steep slopes and across moderate slopes. If in doubt walk the slope to judge the best approach
- Always look behind you before backing.
- If you hit a large object, stop the mower and inspect the blades and shaft. Replace damaged blades.

Walk-Behind Mowers, Follow these addition guidelines for riding lawn mower safety:

- Wear sturdy shoes with good traction. Never wear sandals or sneakers with walk-behind mowers.
- Do not bypass the safety that stops the blade when you release your grip on the handle.
- Mow across slopes rather than up and down slopes.
- Work slowly when mowing tall grass or tough weeds. Forcing the mower may cause clogs and engine stalls.

This lesson plan is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, please contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.