



Summer Safety

## eSafetyLine

### **Avoiding Mower Injuries**

One of the most common chores of the spring and summer months is lawn mowing. For many this can be a pleasant activity; fresh sunny air, the smell of fresh cut grass and a bit of exercise all rolled into one. Unfortunately, it can also be a source of serious injury if safety precautions aren't followed.

Each year, approximately 68,000 persons with injuries caused by power mowers were treated in emergency departments. More than 9,000 of the people hurt were younger than 18 years. Older children and adolescents were most often hurt while cutting lawns as chores or as a way to earn money. Lawn mower injuries include deep cuts, loss of fingers and toes, broken and dislocated bones, burns, and eye and other injuries. Some injuries are very serious. Both users of mowers and those who are nearby can be hurt.

Prevention is the easiest way to safeguard against these injuries. Before mowing even begins the yard should be policed by walking around and looking for hazards such as tree stumps and holes. Any stray rocks, sticks, toys and such should be picked up and discarded. When mowing begins young children should be kept out of the yard for everyone's safety. Other safety recommendations include:

- Always dress for safety; long pants, long-sleeved shirts, eye and ear protection, heavy gloves and sturdy, closed toed shoes with slip resistant soles.
- Protect against the sun. Use a sunscreen a wide-brimmed hat and always drink plenty of water, especially on very warm days.

- Never disconnect the dead man switch. It triggers an important safety feature of stopping the blades quickly as soon as the handle of a walk-behind is released or the operator of a ride-on falls off the seat.
- The mower should always be turned off before trying to examine the blades, dislodge debris or adjust the blade height.
- A lawn shouldn't be mowed when wet, the wetness causes it to be slippery and more hazardous.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under the age of 16 not use ride-on mowers and children under the age of 12 not use walk-behind mowers.
- Never allow passengers on ride-on mowers.
- Slow down to mow slopes and take turns wide and gradual. To avoid tipping over, try mowing down a slope not across it.

Most lawn mower injuries are preventable by practicing the included safety tips. Summer is a time for rest and relaxation, not recuperated from an unnecessary injury.

### **Discussion Questions**

Why should a lawn be mowed before it is mowed?

What is the appropriate age for children to use lawn mowers?

# MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPICS ADDRESSED: \_\_\_\_\_

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## EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION TAKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

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Supervisor's Signature

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Date

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Safety Coordinator's Signature

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Date