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Monthly Safety Blast

Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education

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Don't Get Mowed Down: How to Avoid Lawn Mower Injuries

For some of us, mowing the lawn is a pleasant activity... the fresh sunny air, the aroma of cut grass and the satisfaction of getting a chore done with a side helping of exercise. This all remains true, if safety precautions are taken and safety measures are in place.

The **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission** estimates that 34,000 consumer injuries related to riding mower incidents were treated annually in hospital emergency rooms during 2010-2012. Based on incidents reported to the Commission, an average of 90 deaths per year were attributed to riding mowers during 2007-2009. Fatal incidents have several common patterns: the machine tips over, the victim falls under or is run over by the machine (incidents involving young children are in this category), or the victim is thrown from or falls off the machine.

Safety Recommendations:

- Dress appropriately: long pants, long-sleeved shirts, eye and ear protection, heavy gloves as well as sturdy, closed-toed shoes with slip resistant rubber soles. Wear sun protection and drink plenty of water.
- Never disengage the fail-safe mechanism (dead man switch) found on power mowers. It triggers an important safety feature of stopping the blades quickly as soon as the handle of a walk-behind mower is released or the operator of a ride-on mower falls off of the seat.
- Turn the mower off before attempting to examine the blades, dislodge debris or adjust wheel height.
- Avoid mowing the lawn when it is wet and slippery.
- Do not allow children under the age of 16 to use ride-on mowers and children under the age of 12 to use walk-behind mowers.



Image Source: <http://www.fairview.org/healthlibrary/Article/40073>.

Special Recommendations for Ride on Mowers:

- Never allow passengers on ride-on mowers.
- Always look behind before putting a ride-on mower in reverse.
- Slow down to mow slopes and take turns wide and gradual. To avoid tipping over on a ride-on mower, mow up a slope.

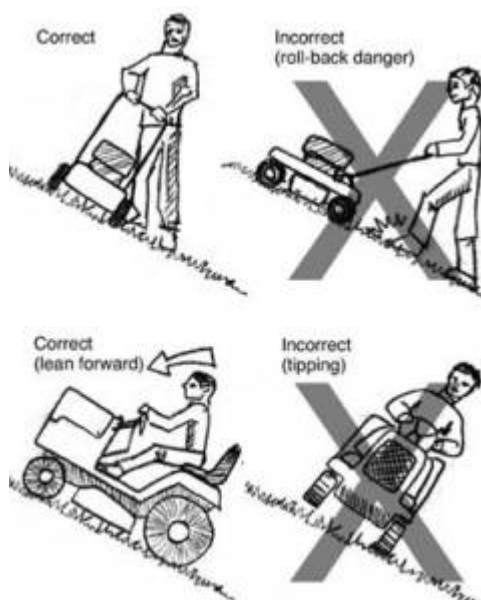


Image Source: <http://nationalsafety.wordpress.com/2012/03/20/lawn-mower-safety-tips/>

Mowing a ditch?

It is strongly recommended to use a hand-held string trimmer. Follow the safety recommendations, keep firm footing and balance; don't overreach and take the time to read the operator's manual.

Lawn mower injuries are preventable. Enjoy a tall glass of lemonade after a job well done using this safety recommendation.

References

1. Statistics from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

<http://www.cpsc.gov/PageFiles/122050/588.pdf>.

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