

Mower Related Mistakes



Some of the most frequent and serious injuries in the landscape industry involve mowers, but because crew members are so familiar with these machines, it's easy to overlook the hazards associated with them.

Do's

- Wear appropriate clothing and PPE when mowing: safety goggles or safety glasses with side shields, steel-toed footwear (no tennis shoes), hearing protection, non-baggy attire including pants and a long-sleeved shirt, gloves and a reflective vest.
- In addition to receiving training, read and understand the operator's manual for each mower before you operate it.
- Prior to each use, inspect the mower for defects such as loose hardware, damaged parts, low tire pressure or missing safety guards or devices. Report any problems to your crew leader.
- Scout the site, removing objects and other debris that could become projectiles and noting potential hazards such as sprinkler heads, holes or drop-off areas, before starting the mower.
- Ensure the mower's rollover protection system (ROPS), if equipped, is deployed and locked in place. If you must fold down the ROPS to avoid overhead obstacles, return it to its upright and locked position as soon as possible.
- Wear the seat belt if the mower you're using is equipped with one and roll-over protection is deployed. If the seat belt is damaged or missing, notify your crew leader or supervisor.
- Drive up and down (not across) slopes when operating ride-on mowers. When using a walk-behind mower, do the opposite: operate across slopes rather up and down them.
- Turn off the engine and let it cool before refueling. The nozzle should contact the rim of the tank while you add fuel. Never smoke or have an open flame near fuel.
- Follow all training related to loading, unloading and transporting mowers and fuel. If you have not received this training, leave these responsibilities to someone who has.

Don'ts

- Be complacent about safety. Just because you've operated a lawn mower thousands of times without having an accident doesn't mean one can't occur.
- Operate a mower until you've received training on that particular model. Instruction should include all operation and safety guidelines in the machine's operating manual, any safety messages attached to the machine and a discussion of hazards associated with the equipment and necessary safety precautions. Remember, training must be provided in a language you understand.
- Bypass the safety seat switch, which turns off the mower when the operator's seat is unoccupied.
- Tamper with or remove any safety feature or device.
- Use a mower with the safety discharge shoot or mower deck deflector shield removed or in an unsafe position.
- Put hands or feet near discharge chutes or beneath mower decks. Never attempt to unclog a mower deck with your hand or foot. Use a long instrument instead. Turn off the engine and wait until all moving parts come to a stop. Be aware – stored energy trapped in the blade mechanism could cause it to spin rapidly once the material blocking it is removed.
- Mow on slopes greater than the mower manufacturer's recommended steepness – typically not more than 15 degrees for a riding mower and not more than 20 degrees for a walk-behind mower.
- Operate a riding mower close to water, retaining walls or drop-offs. Wet, unstable ground near water could cause the machine to overturn or slide into a lake or pond. Even if the water is not deep, you could be pinned under the mower and drown. Stay at least two riding mower widths away from these hazards

Safety Tips written by :

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