

Mowing & Trimming Safety



ALCA
ARIZONA LANDSCAPE
CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

PART 1 OF 4 SERIES

PRE-START INSPECTION

Safety starts before the engine does. A thorough inspection of the mower or trimmer is important before beginning work each day. Alert your supervisor if you find anything wrong during your daily pre-start inspection.

Belts - Check for loose or damaged belts. Loose belts can slip, causing friction and possibly a fire. Belts can also break and be flung from the mower. Tighten loose belts and replace if any separation or cracks are visible.

Blade - Make sure the blade is secure, balanced and covered to prevent injury. Report bent, cracked or worn blades to your supervisor. Protect your hands with heavy-duty gloves when inspecting blades.

Fluid leaks - Fluid leaks can be a fire hazard as well as cause break-downs. Report signs of leaking fluid to your supervisor immediately.

Accumulated grass or grease - Check the mower deck and chute for accumulation of grass clippings, leaves, grease and other debris. Debris build-up on moving parts is a fire hazard and can cause break-downs.

Missing or damaged guards - Guards and shields protect you from moving parts. Check the operator's manual for the location of guards and safety shields on the equipment you are using.

When operating a riding mower - Ensure that the discharge chute's guard is in place to deflect debris and cover the mower's blade. Also, if your equipment has any belts or pulleys, make sure the guards are in place and secured. Check that the operator presence control is working properly. The control shuts the mower off automatically when weight is lifted off of the seat.

When operating a walk behind mower - Ensure the operator presence control is working properly. The engine should shut off automatically when the handle is released. There should be a rear guard installed to protect your feet, as well as a discharge chute on the side of the mower that deflects debris and covers the mower's blade.

Tires - Check tire pressure and look for signs of damage. Make sure lug bolts are tight to keep the wheel from slipping off. Make sure attachments are mounted and fastened correctly.

String/brush trimmer – Ensure the shield covering the string/blade is in place and secured.

Before mowing, prepare the mowing area to ensure a safe working environment for yourself and others.

Remove debris - Walk the area to be mowed. Pick up debris such as rocks, sticks, bottles, cans, wires, etc. Debris picked up by a mower or trimmer can be thrown from the machine at speeds as high as 200 mph or cause the equipment to jam or malfunction.

Be aware of surroundings - While scanning the area for debris, locate other potential hazards such as ditches, drop-offs or embankments. Be aware at all times of the location of co-workers. Keep all others out of the area while you are mowing or trimming. Make sure that the chute of the mower is pointed away from people, animals, buildings and traffic.

Information accumulated by:

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

