



# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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## Safety Tips: Zero Radius Turn Mower Safety

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that 35,000 consumer injuries related to riding mower incidents were treated annually in hospital emergency rooms during 2008-2010. Based on incidents reported to the commission, an average of 90 deaths was attributed to riding mowers during 2006-2008. Hazards most often associated with riding equipment are blade contact and loss of stability.

Fatal incidents causing death can be attributed to the following reasons:

- ✓ Mower tips over.
- ✓ Victim falls under or is run over by the machine
- ✓ Victim is thrown off or falls off the machine.

As we now realize, the zero radius technology is gaining momentum all over the country. The zero radius technology allows the mower to turn at 180 degrees, moving away in the same path that it traveled in on. This enables the operator to mow in close to landscaping and buildings. These fast and agile mowers can totally outmaneuver the conventional type with a steering wheel.

Following are steps to guide you in operating the zero radius turn mowers:

- ✓ **Understand what zero turn radius means-** Because the drive wheels turn independently - powered by hydraulic motors on each axle - one side can turn in reverse while the other turns forward, causing the mower to actually spin like a top in one place.
- ✓ **Select a mower appropriate for your needs-** If you only have a small city type lawn, a few hundred square feet, you really don't need a zero turn mower. If you have a medium or large size yard a 15 to 18 horsepower mower with a 36 to 42 inch cut is good for that size. However, if your yard is an acre or a little larger, you need to consider a larger size, like a 22 to 25 hp. that has a 50 inch cutting radius.
- ✓ **Read the owner's manual-** The owner's manual will give you all the right answers to your questions.
- ✓ **Check out all the controls on your mower, using the owner's manual to help you identify the purpose and function of each one. Following are some of those controls and their functions:**

- ~**Ignition** – cranking the mower.
- ~**Parking brake** – provides extra security for the mower and on most models must be engaged to start the engine.
- ~**Mower clutch** – used to engage the mowing blades.
- ~**Deck height adjustment** – to raise and lower the blades, depending on what height you want to cut the grass.

~**Steering arms** – These arms replace the steering wheel to regulate the direction you want your mower to travel in.

The following service tips should be practiced each time before you start mowing:

- Check the oil and fuel
- Check the belts, pulleys and blades to make sure that they are free of debris and are in good working condition.
- Check the tires. The nature of the mower tends to put a lot stress on the tires with the rapid turns.
- ✓ **Find an area that has sufficient room** - to practice handling the mower before you actually start a mowing project.
- ✓ **Sit down on the mower** - after you have made the selection of your choice. Before you start the engine, adjust the control arms so that they are in a comfortable position. Usually they tilt in and out and left to right from the center of the machine. Some models of ZTRs have a neutral position so that the length of the arms can be adjusted for short or tall folks.
- ✓ **Grasp each control in your hands** - Move the control arms back and forth to get used to their feel. When you release the pressure, they will come back to the neutral position. Push forward - the mower goes forward and pull back - and the mower goes back.
- ✓ **Engage the parking brake, disengage the mower clutch, pull the choke knob, advance the throttle lever, and turn the key to crank the engine,**
- ✓ Slowly push the control arms forward, keeping them equally advanced so that the mower will run in a straight path.
- ✓ Turn you mower left and right by advancing the opposite control stick or easing back the control on the side that you wish to turn to.
- ✓ **Try backing the mower by pulling the arm backward.** Practice at low speeds - by now you probably know that the farther you advance or pull the control arm the faster you travel.
- ✓ **Practice making sharp turns by reversing the control arm on the side you wish to turn to.**
- ✓ Get familiar with the mower deck and the height adjustments. This will let you know the width to cut.

### Safety Tips-

- *Do not let untrained people attempt to use the ZTR.*
- *A good idea is to rent or get access to a ZTR to be sure that this is the machine for you.*
- *Regular lubrication is critical to increase the life of you ZTR & keep the deck clear for the same reason.*
- *Mow in dry conditions - Avoid mowing in wet areas.*
- *Avoid steep inclines - Refer to the owner's manual for charts to show angle of incline they recommend.*

**SAFE OPERATORS ARE  
SMOOTH OPERATORS**

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**BE ALERT <><><><><> BE ALIVE**

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Excerpts: [www.wikihow.com/Operate-a-ZTR-lawnmower](http://www.wikihow.com/Operate-a-ZTR-lawnmower)  
[www.cpsr.gov](http://www.cpsr.gov) 1/18/2013