

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Safety Tips: Lawn
Mower Safety*

June is National Safety Month; however, with MAFES/MSU-ES, we like to think, dedicate, and promote every day, week, month, and year as safety time. So, with the grass here upon on us, we need to have a “heads-up” on grass mowing safety.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (USCPC) relayed in their 2010 report that there were 253,000 people treated for lawn mower related injuries – 17,000 were children under 19 years old.

Based on the numbers above, I believe that it would be prudent for us to use this space to talk about lawn mower safety, maybe saving a severe injury to one of our fellow employees.

Before Beginning to Mow-

Lawn mowers, whether riders, push, or follow along ones, are very useful and labor saving machines but, like any piece of equipment, one can have a serious injury to themselves or a fellow employee.

- Walk around the proposed mowing area and clear it of any obstacles or debris that could be a problem, such as rocks, brush, or garbage.
- Check the terrain for ditches, drop-offs, or uneven areas.
- After clearing the area and checking it for detrimental obstacles to your mowing program, take a minute to look over the area as a whole and plan your method of cutting.
- Look closely in the areas with high grass and weeds, which can conceal bad terrain and hidden obstacles.

Pre-use Lawnmower Inspection-

- Read and check the manufacturer’s manual for specific instructions.
- Make sure all the protective guards are in place.
- Check the steering function to be sure that it is in good condition.
- Test the brakes and check the oil before each trip.
- Make sure that the tires are inflated correctly.

Work with the Proper Personal Protective Equipment-

You should wear:

- ✓ Good sturdy, closed-toe shoes or boots
- ✓ Safety glasses or goggles
- ✓ Hearing protection

DO:

- Wear good, sturdy boots or closed-toe shoes and hearing protection.
- Turn off the mower when people or animals are approaching.
- Use extreme caution when mowing on slopes and hills.

Lawn Mower Operation-

- ✓ Read the manufacturer’s manual to be familiar with all the controls, gauges, and other motor functions.
- ✓ Get familiar with the recommended speed, slope capabilities, braking and steering methods, mower deck clearances, etc.
- ✓ Always start the mower out of the garage or storage building, which allows you to escape possible build-up of fuel vapors.
- ✓ Refrain from mowing over sidewalks, gravel areas, or other hard obstacles.
- ✓ Be sure to keep the mowing area clear of bystanders, children, and pets.
- ✓ Anytime that you leave the mower, be sure to turn off the engine, remove the key, and set the parking brakes.
- ✓ Be aware that the mower blades may coast down to a stop even after you have turned off the engine.
- ✓ Don’t park on a hill. If you leave the mower unattended, be sure to lock the brakes (if it is equipped with a parking brake).

Other Mowing Tips-

- ✓ Keep both feet on the footrests or designated area. Be extra careful when mowing around low hanging limbs and shrubbery.
- ✓ While mowing, be cognizant of your surroundings to avoid encountering animals or interested bystanders.
- ✓ Do not place your hands or feet under the deck with the engine running.
- ✓ Set up your mowing pattern so that you’re throwing the grass and possible unseen rocks away from buildings, animals, or people.
- ✓ Take extra safety precautions when you’re mowing in congested or crowded areas.

General Precautionary Tips-

- Obviously don’t forget and touch “hot” parts.
- Always refuel outdoors. Do not smoke while fueling or refueling.
- Allow the engine to cool down before refueling.
- Wipe up gasoline spills immediately.
- On riding mowers – the rule is always “**One-Seat, One Rider.**” A serious injury or even death could happen to a passenger that could fall off or under the mower deck.

DON’T:

- Remove safety guards from the mower.
- Fuel or refuel the mower while the engine is hot.
- Forget the rule for passengers-“**One-Seat, One Rider**” **No exceptions!**

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Excerpts: <https://www.aap.org>
www.gemplers.com

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**STOP ACCIDENTS BEFORE THEY
STOP YOU!!**

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SAFETY = YOU DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE