MAFES Dawg Tracks

June 5, 2017

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Lawn Mower Safety Tips

Lawn Mower season is upon us. Most of the USA is busy weekly keeping their lawns mowed for the spring, summer and most of the fall months. Maintaining your mower, no matter what type it is, requires weekly maintenance to keep it serviceable.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission states that each year there are more than 60,000 injuries treated at hospital emergency rooms because of unsafe operation of power lawn mowers. I feel that it is prudent that we discuss lawn mower safety tips due to the fact that we all use them unless you pay someone to do it for you:

BEFORE YOU BEGIN MOWING-

Lawn mowers of any style are useful pieces of equipment, but they can injure you or other folks if they aren't maintained and handled with care.

- ✓ Walk around the area to be mowed, look for obstacles or debris that could cause injury to the machine or objects surrounding the mowing area, such as rocks, garbage, sticks, scrap metal or wire.
- ✓ Check the area for hills, depressions or obstacles that might hinder your mowing progress or that could be a potential hazard.
- ✓ Once you are satisfied with the lay and condition of the area, make you a mental and visual plan of how you intend to cover the area that is to be cut.

MOWER INSPECTION-

- ✓ Read the owner's or manufacturer's instruction manual to get familiar with all the parts and function of the mower.
- ✓ If the mower has inflated tires, be sure to check the pressure of the tires. Before each use, you should check the oil pressure, brakes, steering complex, check belts and guards that are intact and in good repair.

PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT-

Wearing or using the proper PPE is important to maintain your safety and protection from a potential personal injury. Depending upon the type of mower that you are using would influence the PPE that you need, but the basics to consider are listed below:

- Closed-toed shoes or boots with non-slip soles and heels.
- Hearing protection.
- Safety glasses or goggles.
- Other articles to consider is a dust mask, long pants, long-sleeve shirt, and a hat or cap for sun protection.

DO:
~Wear the proper Personal Protective Equipment
~Turn off the mower when folks approach
~Use caution when approaching steep slopes
~Beware of people, pets and unseen obstacles when mowing

DON'T:
~Remove safety guards from the mower
~Fuel the mower when the motor is hot
~Remember-"ONE SEAT- ONE RIDER!!
~Point the discharge towards people or buildings

OPERATING A LAWN MOWER-

As mentioned earlier and is most important before you begin to mow is to get familiar with the operator's manual or manufacturer's manual.

- Get totally familiar with all the gauges, dials, controls and their functions relating to the mower's operation.
- It is equally important to get familiar with the recommended speed, the slope capabilities, braking and steering controls, the turning radius and operating clearances for the mower deck and the mower. Be thoroughly familiar with the braking ability, in case you might have to make an emergency stop.
- Always start the mower in an open area, as opposed to a garage or shop. Enclosed areas enhance the presence of fumes and vapors. Do not touch hot parts.
- Avoid mowing over gravel and stones. Be on the "lookout" for pipes, partially submerged culverts, sidewalks and etc.
- You really should clear the area of innocent bystanders and pets. Check all around as you begin mowing for people and pets. If anyone or an animal comes near the mower, shut it off and clear them away before you resume the cutting.
- At any time that you have to leave the mower, obviously, you want to cut off the engine, set the brakes and remove the key before you leave the machine.
- Remember the blades may continue to rotate as the motor is winding down and you have cut off the engine.
- Don't park on a hill. But regardless of the location, always set the brakes and lock them, if the locking mechanism is in place and before you leave the mower.

OTHER TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN MOWING-

- Keep both feet on the foot rests or inside the perimeter of the mower.
- Be careful when mowing around trees with low limbs and around bushes.
- Always, while mowing, be cognizant of the areas- be on the constant "lookout" for pets, maybe children, (if an area that might have them) and also when backing the mower.
- Never reach under the deck with your hands or feet when the mower is running.
- Always plan your path or method of cutting so that the discharge is away from populated areas or buildings.
- Reiterating the fact that we should always stay focused in populated or congested areas.
- Refuel when the engine has cooled down and in an open area. Obviously, **No Smoking** when refueling.
- **THE STANDING RULE IS ALWAYS- "ONE SEAT-ONE RIDER!"**

USE SAFETY AS A VITAL TOOL- AT WORK IT'S THE "GOLDEN RULE"

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Ted Gordon-Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.
MAFES / MSU-EXTENSION - (662) 566-2201
Excerpts: www.gemplers.com 1/26/2017
http://www.basco.com