

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Lawnmowers & Trimmers

Lawnmowers and trimmers are common tools used to tame our yards at home and landscapes at work. However, there are some built in safety features that are often overridden and safe use practices that are often not heeded.

Keep the discharge chute down.

Any objects that is run over with a lawn mower while the blades are engaged will become projectiles. This object can travel up to 200 miles per hour after leaving the discharge chute. These projectiles can cause property damage or serious injuries to people in the area. The discharge chute is equipped with a protective guard or deflector to stop objects from becoming projectiles. Its purpose is to deflect the object down toward the ground instead of an open area to be freely thrown from. However, for the deflector to be effective it must remain in place. The dangerous practice of bungee strapping the deflector up or removing it to increase grass flow from the mower defeats the purpose of deflecting projectiles. This purpose of deflection is also true with guards on trimmer heads.

Always point discharge side away from people and animals.

Do not mow or operate trimmers in an area where young children or animals are playing because they do not understand the dangers. Send them inside or to opposite side of the building from where the work is being done.

If people or animals approach the area, stop & turn the blades off until they pass by.

*For more info contact – Leslie Woolington
MAFES /MSU-EXTENSION
Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control
(662) 325-3204*

Discharge away from buildings, HVAC units & vehicles.

Not only can people or animals be injured from mower and trimmer discharge, but windows can be broken, holes and dirt build-up in HVAC unit coils, damage to vehicles paint and windows; all of which are expensive repairs that can easily be avoided.

Keep the ROPS (roll over protection system) up and wear the seatbelt.

Let's be honest here, ROPS and seatbelts on lawn mowers keep you from getting crushed and dying should the mower turn over - that is important! When mowing on any incline have the ROPS latched in up position and the seatbelt on. The ROPS up with the seatbelt off will allow you to still be crushed but by the ROPS bar instead of the mower itself ... you're still critically injured or dead. So again, wear the seatbelt and keep ROPS bar latched up.

Always wear safety glasses, and don't forget earplugs with loud equipment.

When using a trimmer, the most important piece of personal protective equipment is safety glasses. A blade of grass in your eye will hurt and maybe scratch it; but a rock, piece of stick, or other object can cause permanent irreversible eye damage. Also when operating a lawn mower, either push or riding type, safety glasses are necessary.

While operating most trimmers or mowers for an hour or so once a week will not cause hearing loss, if you do this daily (or have an unusually loud mower, which requires several hours of operation) hearing protection may be necessary.

Sources:
<http://articles.extension.org/pages/67563/riding-lawnmower-safety>