

DAWG TRACKS SAFETY NEWSLETTER

MS Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station
MSU Extension Service



Growing higher, as quickly as the thermometer rises on a Mississippi summer morning, is the grass. While mowing is seemingly a simple task, it can be a hazardous one if precautions are not taken.

An operator must always leave the roll-over protective structure in the locked, up position and wear the seatbelt and safety glasses.

A common and dangerous practice on a lawn mower is tying up or removing the discharge chute deflector; this defeats its purpose. The designed purpose is to direct the mower's discharge consistently while also reducing the height & speed of this flying debris. This controlled discharge is critical in reducing the risk that debris or projectiles turn into hazards.

This deflector could be a rubber-plastic extension or metal plate on a mower's deck or a set of chains on tractor's rotary cutter. However, for either to be effective, it must **remain in the correct position and be maintained** in good condition. An object not deflected can travel up to 200 miles per hour when leaving the cutting deck.

Routine maintenance procedures will keep your equipment in top condition and can help you increase your productivity, while also decreasing any risks of injuries or property damage.

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Follow these tips to
avoid injury and property damage
while mowing.

1. Inspect the area to be mowed.
Walk the work area before you begin. Remove sticks, rocks, wire, and other moveable debris. If there is an object in tall grass areas that cannot be removed, flag it to be visible and avoided.
2. Keep children and bystanders away from the area! If someone is passing by, stop and turn the cutting blades off until they are gone.
3. Mow in a direction that blows discharge away from people, buildings, vehicles, and roadways.
In addition to the obvious projectile injuries, grass clippings themselves can be a danger to motorcyclists. Grass clippings blown onto the road is equivalent to ice in the road for a motorcycle tire. This can lead to serious injuries or even death for those that ride.
4. Shut off blade rotation when crossing a sidewalk, driveway or road.
Also shut off rotation when driving the equipment to another area that needs mowing.
5. Avoid wet grounds. Wet grass creates slippery conditions with increased risks of the mower sliding, losing control or a roll-over situation.

Sources:

<https://ag-safety.extension.org/riding-lawnmower-safety/>