



Safety Tips While Mowing

Introduction

Lawn mowers are commonplace and households use a variety of mowers to care for the green spaces around their homes. Whether you use a push mower, a ride-on mower – or one that runs on gasoline, electricity, propane, or solar energy – it's always important to keep safety in mind. To operate safely, it's important that lawn mower operators understand safety procedures and set expectations with others who use this equipment or are nearby.

Before You Start to Mow

Use the right equipment for the task. Rear-engine riding mowers, front-engine lawn tractors and garden tractors are all designed to cut grass; however, the engine power, cutting widths, and other capabilities of these products are very different. Don't select a product that may be too small or unsuitable for the job. Ask your retailer/dealer for assistance.

Assign the right person. Only allow responsible adults who are familiar with the instructions to operate the machine. Because lawn mowers are easy to use, sometimes people consider allowing their children to perform the weekly task of cutting the lawn. These machines should not be operated by young people who are not physically or developmentally ready to assume the responsibility of operating a powerful machine. Do not let children operate them.

Alert nearby people. Make sure the people in the area know you are going to mow. Confirm the locations of pets and children, and ask that they be kept out of the area and supervised.

Know how to operate your mower. Read the operator's manual to understand the controls. Know how to stop the machine quickly. Do not remove or disable guards or safety devices.

Dress properly. Wear substantial shoes, long pants and close-fitting clothes. You may want eye or hearing protection.

Clear the area being mowed. Remove debris, wires, branches, nails, rocks, or metal that may become projectiles if thrown by the lawn mower blades.

Observe safe fueling procedures. Fill your gasoline tank only when the engine is cool. If you need to refuel before completing a job, turn off the machine and allow the engine to cool. Never light a match or smoke around gasoline. Do not use gas with more than 10 percent ethanol (E10) in your mower. Some gas stations may offer 15 percent ethanol (E15) gas or other fuel blends, but this higher ethanol fuel is

dangerous—and is in fact illegal—to use in your mower or in any small engine equipment. Get more information on safe fueling at www.lookbeforeyouump.com.

Safety Tips While Mowing

The best place for children is away from an operating mower. Do not let children run or play near mowers. When a lawn mower is being used, it is best for children to be inside and under the watchful care of a responsible adult.

Riding mowers are designed to be operated by only one person. You should operate the equipment from the driver's seat only and keep both feet on the machine at all times. The operator should be familiar with the owner's manual and equipment operating instructions.

Be alert. Stop mowing and turn off the engine if children or pets enter the area.

KEY SAFETY TIP: Never give children rides on a riding mower, even with the cutting blades turned off. If you put a child on a riding mower, even with the blades turned off, they may run into the yard asking for another ride later when the machine is operated and could be seriously hurt. Get more tips from our [children and lawn mower safety fact sheet](#).

KEY SAFETY TIP: Do not operate in reverse unless necessary. Be vigilant when putting your mower in reverse or approaching blind corners or obstacles that impede your sight line. Look down and behind you when backing up. Use extreme care when approaching blind corners, shrubs, trees, or other objects that may block your view. Get more tips from our [children and lawn mower safety fact sheet](#).

Operate your mower with the correct attachments and safety features in place. Do not operate your machine without the grass catcher, discharge guard, or other safety devices in place and working.

Only mow when you can see well. Operate your mower in daylight or good artificial light.

Use clear judgment. Do not operate the machine while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

KEY SAFETY TIP: When operating on slopes survey the terrain and select the appropriate machine. Keep away from drop-offs and other hazards (water). Watch for holes, ruts bumps, rocks, or other hidden objects. Uneven terrain could overturn the machine. On a slope there is a risk of slip and slide resulting in a loss of control. Stay away from walls, banks and water hazards when operating. Get more tips from our [safe operation practices on slopes fact sheet](#).

After Mowing

Maintain control of your mower, even after you are finished mowing. Store and lock your mower. Keep keys out of the reach of children.

Store leftover fuel properly. Gasoline should be stored no more than 30 days without being treated with a fuel stabilizer. Use a sealed container that is approved for fuel storage. Always keep fuel out of the reach of children and away from heat sources or flames.

Make sure others know your feelings about your child and contact with mowers. You may not allow your child to ride on your mower with you, but someone else may offer your child a ride. Make sure others know that you do not want your child to ride on a mower or operate a lawn mower.

For more information, visit our website at www.opei.org