



Short Safety Subject

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www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Lawn Mower Safety



One of the most dangerous pieces of equipment used around the home can be your lawn mower.

In 1995, there were 74,582 injuries involving lawn mowers, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). According to the CPSC, 25,300 people are injured by riding lawn mowers each year. Of those injured, 75 are killed, 15 of which are children. Two common injuries, according to the CPSC, are amputations and injuries from thrown objects.

The revolving blade can throw objects at over 200 miles per hour, or about 300 feet per second. The reaction time of most people is about two-thirds of a second, so they won't have time to react, let alone get out of the way of a spinning blade or thrown object.

Five-step plan to avoid injury when using a lawn mower:

- Select the right mower for the job. Make sure you have the size, strength and experience to run it.
- Know your equipment. Read the owner's manual and follow all safety decal instructions. Adults should make sure kids are properly trained before entrusting the mowing job to them.
- Prepare properly. Make sure all mower guards and controls work. Pick up sticks, toys, rocks and trash in the area to be mowed. Dress for safety and keep bystanders well away. "This means wearing deep-tread, hard-toed shoes and long pants for foot and leg protection. People in tennis shoes, sandals or bare feet and shorts may be cooler, but they have no protection or reaction time if the mower throws a rock or their feet slip on the grass." Safety glasses and expandable foam earplugs also should be worn, plus a dust mask for persons prone to respiratory allergies. Cotton ear plugs do not work for keeping out the loud noise levels given off by gas-powered mowers.
- Use the proper fueling method. Remove the ignition wire from the spark plug, and cool a hot mower for 10 minutes or more before refueling. Refuel outdoors or in a well-vented area, and use the right fuel/oil mix for the type of engine. Electric mowers should be plugged into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet to prevent shock or electrocution.
- Operate the mower safely. Wait until the grass is dry before mowing. With push mowers, mow across the slope, never up and down. With riding mowers, mow up and down slopes, not across them, and never allow extra riders. Slopes too steep for either mower should be trimmed by hand or planted with a low-maintenance ground cover. Take extra care when turning, and look behind you before backing up with a riding mower. Avoid pulling a push mower backward - you risk having your feet slip under the mower deck. And be sure to shut the mower off before unclogging it or leaving it.