

# Lawnmower Safety

As temperatures rise, many people are looking forward to spending more time outdoors and sprucing up their lawn and garden. There are several safety issues that surround the use of gardening equipment, such as lawnmowers. The National Safety Council estimates that over 76,000 people require emergency room treatment every year because of an injury due to a garden tractor or lawnmower. It is important to understand the risks associated with use of a lawnmower, and the following are suggestions to think about while doing yard work this season:

- Know your mower. Make sure you read the owner's manual and know how to shut it off in an emergency situation.
- Remove all debris from the lawn before you start mowing.
- Wear pants, eye protection and heavy-duty shoes when using a lawnmower.
- Leave all safety features alone. Do not try to alter your mower.
- Do not allow anyone to ride on the mower.
- Always start up the mower outdoors—not in a shed or garage where carbon monoxide can build up.
- Never refuel the mower while the engine is hot. Take a break while the engine cools off.
- Never cross driveways or paths while the blade is rotating. The blade on the mower can throw rocks from underneath and cause injury.
- If possible, mow during the day in dry conditions.
- Stop the mower when a pet or person is in the immediate area.
- Never mow across a hill, mow up and down it instead.

Mowing the lawn is a big responsibility. So how do you decide when your children are able to help out? As a rule of thumb, a child should be able to read and understand the lawnmower's owners' manual. The child must also be tall enough to reach the controls and handle the mower. Parents should supervise children several times before letting them mow the lawn on their own.



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