

Mower Safety

This Everyday Safety Tailgate Talk was originally published as part of the June 2016 training series "The Safety Pins" by Phillip E. Spiezio, Washington County Safety Officer

Failure to observe safety precautions when operating mowing equipment can result in serious injury or death. Here are some facts and tips that can help keep you safe while mowing:

Mowers are noisy

Noise levels are typically around 90–100 decibels

- Keep mowers in good repair to minimize noise levels
- Wear hearing protection

Mower blades can throw objects into the air

- Make sure guards, including drag shields and discharge deflectors, are in place
- Don't remove a grass catcher or unclog a discharge chute with the motor running
- Wear safety glasses
- Clear the work area of trash, debris, rocks, and other items that might be thrown by the mower
- Keep people out of the work area
- When crossing gravel, do not leave the blades spinning



Mower blades are powerful enough to cause cuts and amputations

- Keep your hands away from the blades
- Before cleaning or performing maintenance on a mower, shut it off, let the engine cool, and disconnect the spark plug
- Wear nonslip safety shoes
- Do not mow on slippery surfaces
- With a push mower, mow across slopes so that if you slip, your feet will not go under the mower (on the downhill slope), or so the mower will not roll back onto you (on an uphill slope)

Mower engines are hot!

- Don't touch a hot engine
- Don't refill the mower until the engine cools

Riding mowers can roll over

- Never mow a wet slope with a riding mower
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for mowing across, up, or down slopes and hills
- Do not mow a slope that is too steep (according to the manufacturer's instructions) for the mower
- Mow slowly on slopes
- Do not try to stabilize the mower by putting your foot on the ground
- Do not try to stabilize the mower with makeshift weights
- Watch for holes, edges, obstacles, and uneven terrain that could tip the mower
- Be extremely careful in tall grass, because it can hide obstacles, hazards, and edges

Action Item:

Related Topics:

- Driver Operator Safety

Resources and References:

Mowing and Trimming Safety

Kansas State University Research and Extension

https://www.osha.gov/dte/grant_materials/fy09/sh-19503-09/mowing-trimming_safety_manual.pdf

Dangers of Roll-Overs of Riding Mowers

OSHA Web URL

https://www.osha.gov/dsg/riding_mowers/

Mowing and Trimming Safety

National Ag Safety Database

<http://nasdonline.org/1926/d001880/mowing-and-trimming-safety.html>

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