

Be Safe When Mowing Lawns

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are available in Spanish at gemplers.com.

Key Points:

- Before mowing, identify any obstacles and plan the path that you will mow.
- Know how to safely operate the mower you are using.
- Always wear safety glasses and hearing protection while mowing.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold. Have the lawn mowers you use available to discuss their specific safety features.

Before you begin mowing

- Lawn mowers are useful pieces of machinery, but they can also injure you or others if care is not used.
- Walk around the area and identify obstacles that might get in your way.
- Obstacles that should be moved include garbage, rocks, sports equipment, sticks, equipment, parts and wire.
- Other obstacles include hills, ditches, trees, stumps, buildings, sidewalks and driveways.
- After determining the obstacles, visually plan out the path you will take with the mower.
- Remember that obstacles are harder to see in tall grass, weeds or brush.

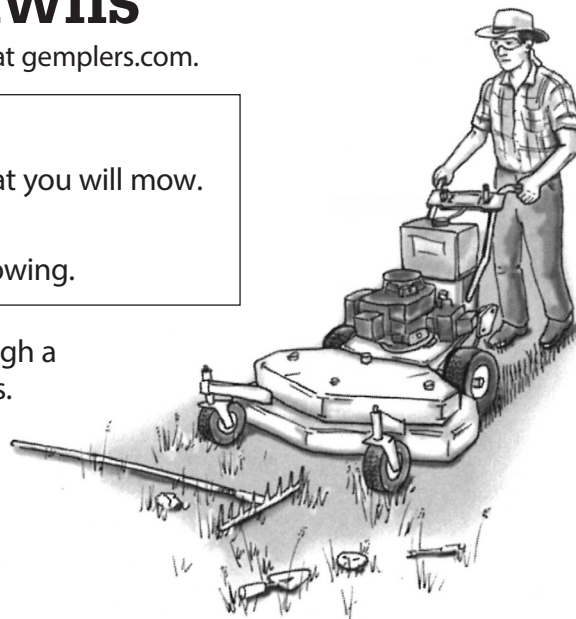
Next, inspect the lawn mower

- Check the owner's manual for specific instructions.
- Make sure all protective guards are in place.
- Determine that steering is responsive before using.
- Test the brakes.
- Make sure the tires are properly inflated and check the oil.

Wearing the right personal protective equipment (PPE) is important for your safety

- You should wear:
 - Sturdy, closed-toed, non-slip shoes
 - Safety glasses or goggles
 - Hearing protection

Note to trainer: Tell your employees what other personal protective equipment they should wear. This may include dust masks, long pants, long sleeve shirts, shin guards, or steel-toed boots.



Always be on the lookout for obstacles or objects.



Wear the proper PPE.



(Continued on back)

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Operating a lawn mower

- Read the operator’s manual. Know the purpose of all controls, gauges and dials.
- Learn the safe speed, slope capabilities, braking and steering methods, turning radius, and operating clearances of the mower. And, know how to stop the machine quickly in case of an emergency.

Note to trainer: Take some time to discuss the specific safety features of the mowers your operation uses.

- Don’t start a mower in an enclosed area, such as a garage, to avoid building up dangerous vapors.
- Don’t mow over gravel, stones or hard objects such as pipes, rocks or sidewalks.
- If anyone comes near a mower, shut it off. Don’t mow near children.
- Set the brakes, turn off the engine and remove the key before leaving the mower.
- Be aware that the mower blades may continue to rotate for some time after you turn the mower off.
- Don’t park a mower on a hill. When you do leave a mower unattended, lock the brakes if a locking mechanism is available.



Remember to turn off your mower if someone approaches.

While you are operating a lawn mower

- Keep both feet on the footrests or designated areas of the mower.
- Use caution when mowing around low hanging branches and shrubs.
- Always look behind you for small children, pets or obstructions, before backing the mower.
- Do not place hands or feet under the deck when operating or when the engine is running.
- Do not point the discharge toward people, animals or buildings.
- Use special care when operating in populated or congested areas.

Some more safe lawn mowing rules

- Do not touch hot motor parts.
- Always refuel outdoors. Do not smoke while refueling.
- Never fill the gasoline tank on the mower if the engine is hot. Any gasoline, which is spilled, should be wiped up immediately.
- At no time should extra riders be allowed on the mower. Serious injury or death can result from falling off the mower and being run over.



Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees’ questions. Then review the Lawn Mowing Do’s and Don’ts.

LAWN MOWING DO’S AND DON’TS

DO:

- Wear safety glasses and hearing protection.
- Turn off the mower when people approach.
- Use caution when moving on steep slopes.

DON’T:

- Remove safety guards from a mower.
- Fuel the mower while the engine is hot.
- Allow others to ride on the mower with you.

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