

LAWN AND GARDEN SAFETY TIPS

Distributed by the Winter Park Campus *Safety & Crisis Management Team*



According to the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than 800 young children are run over by riding mowers each year. The commission reminds consumers to practice safety and common sense when working in their yards and gardens this summer. About 230,000 people each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries relating to various lawn and garden tools.



Each year, about 75 people are killed and about 20,000 are injured on or near riding lawnmowers and garden tractors. One out of every five deaths involves a child. CPSC estimates that most of the deaths to children occurred when a child was in the path of a moving mower.

"No parent wants their child to be one of these statistics," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown. "Young children move quickly and are attracted to mowing activity, but they don't understand the dangers it poses. Parents should keep young children away from any outdoor power equipment."

CPSC advises consumers to learn about the hazards of each piece of equipment, and take the following precautions to prevent injuries to children and themselves from lawn and garden equipment:

Children should never be in the yard while you're mowing, and they should never ride on the mower. More than 800 young children get run over or backed over by riding mowers each year. This happens when children fall while being given rides, or when they approach the operating mower.

Never assume children will remain where you last saw them. Be alert and turn off the mower if children enter the mowing area. Use extra care when backing up or going around corners, shrubs, trees or other obstacles.



Many children suffer serious burns to their hands and arms when they touch the hot muffler of running or recently running engines. Keep children away from power equipment.

Be sure you know how to operate the equipment. Know where the controls are and what they do. Make sure the equipment is in proper operating condition and guards or other safety devices have not been removed or disabled.



Dress appropriately for the job. This includes: sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles, long pants and long-sleeved shirts, close-fitting clothes, eye protection, heavy gloves, hearing protection when needed, and no jewelry, which can get caught in moving parts.

Before mowing, walk around the area in which you will be working to remove any objects like sticks, glass, metal, wire, stones and string that could cause injury or damage equipment. Nails and wire are the most hazardous objects thrown by mowers, capable of killing bystanders.

Never work with electric power tools in wet or damp conditions. For protection against electrocution, use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). GFCIs come in several models, including portable plug-in types and as part of some extension cords.

Be sure that extension cords are in good condition, are rated for outdoor use, and are the proper gauge for the electrical current capacity of the tool. Before making adjustments or clearing jams near moving parts, unplug electric tools and disconnect spark plug wires on gasoline-powered tools.

Be sure that power tools are turned off and made inoperable if they must be left unattended. This will help prevent use by children.

Handle gasoline carefully. Remember never to fill gas tanks while machinery is operating or when equipment is still hot. Do not fuel equipment indoors. Wipe up spills. Remember to store gas in an approved container away from the house.

Finally, never smoke or use any type of flame around gasoline.

