

Lawn Mower Safety for Kids



Having your child cut the grass can be helpful to you. It can also give your child a sense of responsibility. But mowing the lawn can be dangerous. Each year, both children and adults are hurt using riding mowers and walk-behind or hand-powered mowers.



What to teach your child

Your child needs to be aware of the dangers of lawn mowers. Before you let your child cut the grass, be sure to teach them the following:

- Anyone who uses the lawn mower should read the operator's manual. They should also read any instructions on the mower itself.
- Each time the mower is used, all parts should be checked to make sure they are in good working order. Parts to be checked include protective guards, shields, and the grass catcher.
- Appropriate clothing should be worn. This includes sturdy, closed-toe shoes, safety glasses, and hearing protection. Don't wear loose-fitting clothing. It could get caught in moving parts of the mower.
- Hands and feet should be kept away from moving parts.
- Twigs, rocks, toys, and other materials should be cleared out of the area to be mowed. This is because these items could be picked up and thrown by the mower blades, injuring nearby people.
- A lawn mower should not be used on wet grass or during bad weather, such as a thunderstorm.
- Operators should watch where they're going while mowing. They should look out for holes, ditches, and hidden hazards. Care should be taken when turning corners.
- When mowing on slopes, speed should be reduced during sharp turns. Extra attention is needed on steeper slopes. For instance, a riding mower should be directed up and down the slope to prevent tipping. And a walk-behind mower should be directed side-to-side so the operator can't slip under the mower.
- The mower blade for riding mowers should be disengaged when on pavement or gravel. Read the instruction manual to learn how to do this.

- The mower should be shut off and cooled down before any adjustments or repairs are made, or before the mower is unclogged. Also, it should be shut off when the grass catcher is emptied, and anytime the operator walks away from it.
- The mower should be shut off and allowed to cool before gasoline is added.

Is your child ready to mow?

Mowing takes a certain level of judgment, strength, and coordination to do safely. Follow these tips to decide whether your child is ready:

- As a general rule, your child should be at least 12 years old to use a walk-behind power mower or hand mower. A child should be at least 16 years old to use a riding lawn mower.
- Spend time teaching and showing your child how to properly use mowing equipment. Review the safety tips listed above with your child. And make sure your child knows how to stop the mower quickly if needed.
- Supervise your child's work until you are sure that they can mow safely alone.

Keeping young children safe around lawn mowers

No matter who is mowing, precautions need to be taken to protect younger children. Here are ways to keep young kids from being injured by lawn mowers:

- Pay attention to where children are while the lawn is being mowed. Don't allow them near the area being worked on. Keep children indoors while mowing is being done.
- Never let anyone, including a child, ride as a passenger on a riding mower. Lawn mowers are made to carry one person only. Also, don't let children be towed behind the mower in a cart or trailer.
- Teach kids that the lawn mower is not a toy. They should not play with it or sit on it, even when it is turned off and in storage.

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