

Power Lawnmower Safety

This Position Statement was developed as an educational tool based on the opinion of the authors. It is not a product of a systematic review. Readers are encouraged to consider the information presented and reach their own conclusions.

More than 235,000 people—including approximately 17,000 children—were treated in doctors' offices, clinics and emergency rooms for lawnmower-related injuries in 2010, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Lawnmower injuries often result in partial or complete amputation of lower or upper extremities.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons believes that the great majority of injuries caused by lawnmowers are preventable. The Academy recommends the following safety guidelines when using lawnmower equipment.

- For safety purposes, read all owner instruction manuals before use, do not tamper with safety release switches, and keep blades sharp.
- Wear protective gloves, goggles, boots and long pants when you use lawnmowers. Never mow barefoot or in sandals.
- Remove stones, toys and other objects from the lawn before you start mowing.
- Use caution when mowing hills and slopes. Mow across with a push mower; mow up and down with a riding mower. Do not cut wet grass.
- Be sober (i.e., don't drink and mow.)
- No riders other than the operator, regardless of age, should be allowed on a riding mower.
- Children should be educated on lawnmower use and safety.
- Never let children operate power lawnmowers.
- Keep children away from power lawnmowers even when not in use.
- Turn the motor off when unattended or before any inspections, repairs, or adding fuel.
- Stay away from the engine cowling, as it can become very hot and burn unprotected flesh.
- Use a stick or broom handle (not your hands or feet) to remove debris in lawnmowers or snow blowers.
- Impaired or distracted lawnmower equipment operators are a danger to themselves and others. Do not use alcohol or drugs before or during mowing. Do not talk on your cell phone, text or listen to music during mowing.

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