



**SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Use toolbox trainings to encourage safety/environmental discussions during monthly meetings with employees.
- Campus Services' employees should maintain the employee sign-in sheet in their department's safety/environmental compliance binder as a record of training. All other groups should maintain a record of training in accordance with their Division's training procedures.

**L**awn mowers have come a long way since the first patent was granted in 1830. The better performance of today's mowers means there are additional safety issues we should all be aware of. When operating a power mower, following the tips below can prevent accidents and injuries.

**Before You Start**

- **You must be trained** to operate the equipment.
- **Visually inspect equipment** and make sure it's in good condition. Check the following:
  - Air filter is clean.
  - There are no broken or loose parts.
  - Fittings have been cleaned and were greased after cleaning.
  - Oil level is sufficient.
  - Blades are sharp.
  - Fuel is in tank. Do not refuel while the engine is hot.
- **Wear the right personal protective equipment (PPE)** and ensure it is in good condition.
  - Hearing protection
  - Safety glasses
  - Gloves
  - Steel/ composite toe work boots with aggressive (deep) tread
  - Emory uniform
- **Survey the work area** before you mow. Observe objects within 50 feet.
  - Clear the work area of sticks, rocks bottles, cans and other debris before you begin.
  - Note any apparent changes in elevation.
  - Be aware of the location of co-workers and bystanders.
- **Adhere to Emory's noise level policy.**



Photo from OSHA.gov of mower inspection

## SAFETY/ENVIRONMENTAL TOOLBOX TALKS – MOWER SAFETY

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### General Information

- **Do not mow near ditches, embankments or steep slopes.** The wheels on a mower can easily drop off or slide over the edge. Use a string trimmer to cut grass in these areas.
- **Do not operate mowers on steep hills.** Refer to the operator's manual for the maximum slope allowed for your equipment.
- **Try not to mow wet grass.** Do not mow if the ground is saturated.
- **Alternate cutting patterns weekly.**
- **Shut off equipment when crossing a sidewalk, driveway or road.**

### Riding Mowers

- **Mow up and down slopes,** not across. Your mower can become unbalanced and overturn on slopes.
- **Keeps guards in place** and ensure safety interlocks are functioning.
  - Discharge chute guard is in place to deflect debris and cover the mower's blade.
  - Guards installed over belts and pulleys.
  - Operator presence control shuts the mower off automatically when weight is lifted off of the seat.
- **Keep the heavy end uphill** to avoid a rollover. Refer to your operator's manual to determine which end is heavier.
- **Wet grass can cause riding mowers to slide or skid, throwing you off.**



Photo from OSHA.gov of riding lawn mower used to mow a slope.

### Walk Behind Mowers

- **Mow across slopes,** not up and down.
- **Take it slow when mowing on a slope.**
- **Keeps guards in place** and ensure safety interlocks are functioning.
  - The engine should shut off automatically when the handle is released.
  - Rear guard installed to protect feet
  - Discharge chute on the side of the mower to deflect debris and cover the mower's blade.
- **Pay attention and watch your footing.** Wet grass can cause you to slip and fall into the equipment's moving parts.
- **Never work on the equipment while it is running.**
  - Turn off the engine;
  - Disconnect the spark plug wire (or unplug if electrical); and
  - Allow moving parts to stop before unclogging, adjusting, changing blades or working on equipment.

## SAFETY/ENVIRONMENTAL TOOLBOX TALKS – MOWER SAFETY

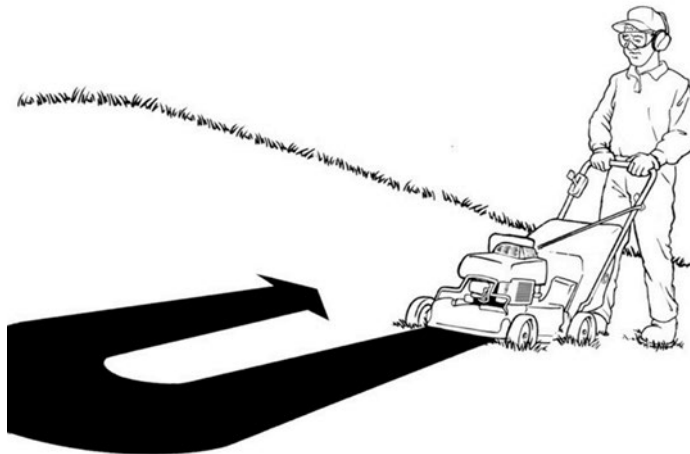
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### Questions for Discussion

1. Does the picture indicate a safe or unsafe way of mowing the hill? Explain.



2. Does the picture indicate a safe or unsafe way of mowing the hill? Explain.



3. Conduct an inspection of your safety shoes. If you see tears, holes, loss of tread on the bottom, or a separation between soles and uppers, speak to your supervisor about replacing your shoes.

### **Credits**

Content Source: "Mowing and Trimming Safety For Landscaping and Horticulture Services Industry." K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Accessed April 15, 2021. [https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/2019-03/mowing-trimming\\_safety\\_manual.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/2019-03/mowing-trimming_safety_manual.pdf)

Image source: "Georgia Center for Urban Agriculture study guide." *Center for Urban Agriculture Empowering Georgia through UGA Extension*. Accessed April 15, 2021. <https://www.ugaurbanag.com/safety#safetymakessense>