

Safety First!

- Remove the key from any riding mowers and leave the mower in “park.”
- Disconnect the spark plug for any mowers that will be used in demonstration as props.
- Do not start lawn mower with blade engaged. Make sure blade is disengaged to prevent debris flying at the children.

Break the Ice

- Tell them about yourself and any experiences you have with small machinery.
- Ask questions – this will encourage the children to be more involved!
- For example:
 - Do you or anyone in your family operate a lawnmower, weed whip, power tool or chain saw?
 - Do you know anyone who has been injured while using these items? What happened to them?

Take-Home Messages

- Objects thrown from a mower discharge chute can travel at 200 miles per hour.
- For children that are too young to operate equipment, stress the importance of staying away from an area while it is being mowed.
- Describe the importance of picking up debris from lawn before mowing. Rocks, glass and wire are some of the objects that can be thrown from moving blades. This can result in severe injury occurring to both people and pets.
- For participants old enough to operate mowers, discuss the different safety features found on small equipment, what they do and why they are important.
- Hand and foot injuries (deep cuts, loss of fingers and toes) are most common from lawn mowers. Eye injuries are also very common.
- Dress properly for the job; no sandals or bare feet. Wear long pants and protective footwear.
- Make sure riding lawnmowers are equipped with safety shut off (machine shuts off when you get off the seat).
- Wear earplugs to protect your hearing and goggles or sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Riding mowers – NEVER ride as a passenger, easy to fall off and become seriously hurt.
- All machines should have proper safety guards in place before using.
- Approach operators of machine with extreme caution to make sure you are seen.
- Small children should not be playing in the area where mowers are operating.
- Young people must be able to reach all controls and be supervised when learning to use a riding lawnmower.

- Teach safe techniques for operating a mower.
- Only start the machine when you are sitting properly in the seat.
- Keep both feet on the mower at all times.
- Do not jump off of a moving machine.
- Slow down when mowing around corners, turning or on slopes.
- Make sure the mower is in neutral and the blades are disengaged before starting.
- Mow across slopes when using a push mower.
- Mow up and down slopes when using a riding mower.

Interactive Activities

Safe or Unsafe

- Read the following statements and have the kids decide if this describes something safe or unsafe. If a statement is unsafe talk about how it could be made safe.
 - Mowing the lawn when it is wet.
 - Wearing hearing protection when using a lawn mower or chain saw.
 - Wearing sandals and shorts to mow the lawn.
 - Letting your younger brother ride on the fender of the riding lawnmower.
 - Mow in an area where children are playing.
 - Picking up debris such as toys, rocks or wood before mowing the lawn.
 - Removing safety guards to prevent the machine from plugging up.
 - Turn off mower and make sure the blades have quit rotating before unplugging machine.
 - Filling the gas tank while mower is still running or hot.
 - Only mowing when it is daylight.

Debris Hazard Hunt

- Identify an area that you can use to 'plant' debris that should be picked up before mowing. Scatter various debris in this area such as toys, rocks, rakes, wiener stick, garbage, nails, pop bottles, etc. Challenge the students to become 'detectives' and search the area to find and collect as much debris as possible in two minutes. Review why it is important to clean an area before mowing.

Notes