# LAWN MOWER SAFETY

## What items you will need...

☐ Operator's Manual

☐ Appropriate Clothing (sturdy shoes, long pants, & work gloves)

☐ Safety Glasses
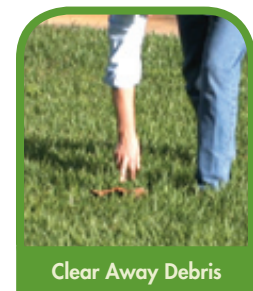
## Important information...

**Always:**

- Read your operator's manual before using your mower and refer to it whenever you have a question.
- Dress appropriately when you mow your lawn. Wear sturdy work shoes and long pants when mowing. Never wear sandals or open-toed shoes. Work gloves and safety glasses are recommended.

## Things to consider...

Whether you have just purchased your first mower or you have been mowing your lawn for years, safety should always be top of mind. Review these safety tips to avoid situations that could result in injury to you or your family.

## Steps...

**1** Before you mow, walk through your yard and pick up any items such as sticks, stones, debris and toys. Mowing over items can damage your mower blade and result in objects being thrown from the mower's discharge chute, which could cause injury.

**2** Be certain that children and pets are not in the yard when you mow. Keep them inside the house and supervised so they don't unexpectedly come into the yard while you're mowing. Never allow a child to ride on a riding mower or walk along side even with the blades shut off. They may fall off and be seriously injured or interfere with safe operation of the mower. Be alert. Turn off the machine if a child enters the mowing area. In general, never allow a child under the age of 16 to operate a riding mower or under the age of 12 to operate a walk-behind mower.
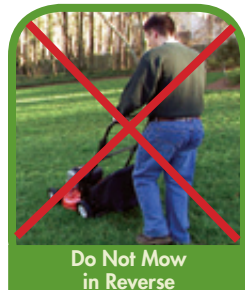


Clear Away Debris



Keep Children Out of Lawn when Mowing

## Steps (con't.)

**3** Start your lawn mower outside – never start or operate any outdoor power equipment in a garage, shed or other building even if the doors or windows are open. Only add fuel when the mower is turned off, and only do so outdoors. Wait at least 2 minutes for walk-behind mowers and 3 minutes for riding mowers before refueling. Allow spilled gas to evaporate before starting your mower engine.


Work Outside

**4** Keep all lawn mower safety devices such as guards, shields, switches, etc. in place and in proper working condition. Walk-behind mowers have a safety bar on the handle that must be held when you mow. When you release the safety bar, the mower blade will automatically shut off. Riding mowers are equipped with a safety shut-off, too. If you want to leave the seat, you must turn the mower blades off and set the parking break. If you are leaving a riding mower unattended, always turn off the engine and remove the key. Never try to disarm any of the important safety features – they are there for your protection.


Safety Bar

**5** Mow only when your lawn is dry and when you have enough daylight to clearly see what you are doing.

**6** Never pull a running walk-behind mower backwards toward your feet as you may trip and fall. Injuries may occur in this way.


Do Not Mow
in Reverse

**7** Do not mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary. Always look down and behind before and while traveling in reverse, even with the mower blades disengaged, to avoid hitting a person or pet.

**8** Mowing on slopes and hills can be dangerous. If you feel unsure about operating your mower on an incline, don't do it.
- Walk-behind mower: always mow across the slope.
- Riding mower: always mow up and down the slope, or mow as recommended by the operating manual. As a general rule of thumb, don't operate a riding mower on slopes that rise more than 3.5 feet over a 20-foot length. If you can't back up a slope on a traditional riding lawn mower (i.e. one with a steering wheel), don't mow it because it is too steep.


Mowing on Slopes

## Steps (con't.)

**9**   Always keep your hands and feet away from the mower deck – the part of the mower that covers the blade while the mower is running.

**10**   Finally, maintain your mower so that it will operate properly. Your operator's manual contains maintenance information. You can also learn how to tune-up your mower by viewing our YardSmarts tune-up tutorial.

Danger Label

Tune-up Your Engine