

Mowing Safety



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Prepare for Safe Operation

Safety starts before the engine. A thorough inspection of the mower is important before beginning work each day. Alert your supervisor if you find anything wrong during your daily pre-start inspection.

Belts

Pre-Start Checklist

Belts

- Secured?
- Not cracked or separated?

Blade

- Secure and balanced?
- Sharpened?
- Free of excessive wear?

Fluid Leaks

- No sign of fluid leaks?

Accumulated Grass or Grease

- Mower, deck and chute free of debris?

Guards

- All guards in place?
- No sign of damaged guards?

Tires

- Proper inflation?
- No visible damage?
- Lug bolts tight?

Attachments (if applicable)

- Mounted and secured properly?

Check for loose or damaged belts. Loose belts can slip, causing friction and possibly a fire. Belts can also break and be flung from the mower. Tighten loose belts and replace belts if any ply separation or cracks are visible.

Blade

Make sure the blade is secure, balanced and covered to prevent injury. Report bent, cracked or worn blades to your supervisor. Protect your hands with heavy-duty gloves when inspecting blades.

Fluid leaks

Fluid leaks can be a fire hazard, as well as cause breakdowns. Report signs of leaking fluid to your supervisor immediately.

Accumulated grass or grease

Check the mower deck and chute for accumulations of grass clippings, leaves, grease and other debris. Debris buildup on moving parts is a fire hazard and can cause breakdowns.

Missing or damaged guards

Guards and shields protect you from moving parts. Check the operator's manual for the location of guards and safety shields on the equipment you are using.

When operating an agricultural mower

Ensure there is a shield covering the power take-off (PTO) to keep you from being entangled in the rotating shaft. Also, if your equipment has any belts or pulleys, make sure the guards are in place and secured.

When operating a riding mower

Ensure that the discharge chute's guard is in place to deflect debris and cover the mower's blade. Also, if your equipment has any belts or pulleys, make sure the guards are in place and secured. Also, check that the operator presence control is working properly. The control shuts the mower off automatically when weight is lifted off of the seat.

When operating a walk-behind mower

Ensure the operator presence control is working properly. The engine should shut off automatically when the handle is released. There should be a rear guard installed to protect your feet, as well as a discharge chute on the side of the mower that deflects debris and covers the mower's blade.

Prepare mowing area

Prepare the mowing area before beginning to ensure a safe working environment for yourself and others.

- Remove debris: Walk the area to be mowed. Pick up debris such as rocks, sticks, bottles, cans, wires, etc. Debris picked up by a mower or trimmer can be thrown from the machine at speeds as high as 200 mph or cause the equipment to jam or malfunction.
- Be aware of surroundings: While scanning the area for debris, locate

other potential hazards, such as ditches, drop-offs or embankments. Be aware at all times of the location of co-workers. Keep all others out of the area while you are mowing or trimming. Make sure that the chute of the mower is pointed away from people, animals, buildings and traffic.

Safe fueling procedures

Gasoline and other fuels are flammable. Follow safe fueling procedures to help reduce the risk of fuel ignition.

- Always shut off the engine and wait at least five minutes for the engine to cool before refueling.
- Use only approved fuel containers, and store in a well-ventilated area, away from direct sunlight.
- Never smoke or have an open flame near fuel.
- Touch the fuel nozzle to the machine before removing the fuel cap to prevent a static spark from igniting the fuel.
- Use a funnel or a non-spill nozzle when fueling to reduce spillage.
- Keep the nozzle or funnel in contact with the fuel tank while filling.
- Wipe up all spills immediately before starting the engine.
- Never clean your hands with gasoline. Use a nonflammable solvent instead.

To properly fill fuel containers:

1. Set the container on the ground.
2. Touch the nozzle to the container before removing the container lid.
3. Keep the nozzle in contact with the container while filling.
4. Don't fill to the brim. Leave room for expansion. Portable containers and gas tanks should be filled three-quarters full.
5. To reduce the chance of static sparks, do not fill containers in the bed of a pickup or in a car.

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