

Slope Solutions & Safety

The logo for Turf, featuring the word "Turf" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'T'.The logo for Tree Services, featuring the words "Tree Services" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf graphic is above the 'e' in "Services". Below the main text is the tagline "Taking Tree Care to New Heights" in a smaller, italicized font.The logo for DesignBuild, featuring the word "Design" in a black, sans-serif font and "Build" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. A small orange square graphic is above the 'i' in "Design".The logo for PLOW, featuring the word "PLOW" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly slanted to the right.

Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

Mowing on slopes is never an easy task. All too often, landscape contractors find themselves stuck with downed equipment when first mowing slopes in the spring because they don't consider common safety reminders. And when equipment isn't running, the business isn't making money.

"When mowing on a slope, paying attention to the terrain is very important," explains Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the [Outdoor Power Equipment Institute](#) (OPEI). "Be vigilant of risks and know how to fully operate your mower."

OPEI recommends the following safety tips for operating mowers on slopes.



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- 1. Operating any mower on a slope requires extra caution.** Slopes are a major factor related to loss of control and tip over accidents, which can result in severe injury.
- 2. Use the right equipment for the task.** Don't select a product that may be too small or unsuitable for the job. Ask your dealer for assistance.
- 3. Know how to operate your mower.** Read the operator's manual to understand the controls. Know how to stop your mower quickly and disengage the controls.
- 4. Survey the terrain.** Watch for holes, ruts bumps, rocks or other hidden objects. Uneven terrain could overturn the machine. Tall grass can hide obstacles.
- 5. Be vigilant of risks, especially when operating on a slope.** On a slope, there is a risk of slip and slide resulting in a loss of control. Be aware of the risks of rolling backwards, dropping off a wall or bank and the potential to overturn into a water hazard.

As Kiser says, “These best practices can help lawn mower operators avoid potential mishaps.”

Even when slopes aren’t involved, keeping general safety tips in mind is crucial in operating an efficient mowing business.

Equipment care, maintenance and safety is a year-round activity. To operate machines safely, it’s important that equipment operators understand safety procedures and set expectations with others who use this equipment or are nearby. Here are some additional key tips from OPEI for safe operation of mowers, chain saws, trimmers and edgers, generators and other outdoor power equipment for lawn care and landscape management.



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- Use the right equipment for the task. Select a “right-sized” product for the job. Ask your dealer for assistance in size, capabilities, power sources and features that fit your needs.
- Train crew members to properly use the equipment.
- Alert nearby people of work to be done. Confirm the locations of pets and children and ask that they be kept out of the area and supervised.
- Read the operator’s manual to understand the controls of your equipment. Know how to stop the machine quickly. Do not remove or disable guards or safety devices.
- Regularly inspect your equipment. Check for loose belts and missing or damaged parts. Drain and responsibly dispose of old oil and put in fresh oil before starting equipment that has been in long-time storage. Install clean air filters so your engine and equipment will run optimally.
- Have mower cutting blades sharpened so mowers will operate more efficiently, cutting lawns cleaner and making them healthier.
- Clear the area being managed. Remove debris, wires, branches, nails, rocks or metal that may become projectiles if thrown by lawn mower blades and other equipment.
- Dress properly. Wear substantial shoes, long pants and close-fitting clothes. Wear eye and/or hearing protection.
- Observe safe fueling procedures. Fill your gasoline tank only when the engine is cool. If you need to refuel before completing a job, turn off the machine and allow the engine to cool. Never light a match or smoke around gasoline.
- Do not use gas with more than 10 percent ethanol (E10) in your mowers. Some gasoline filling stations may offer 15 percent ethanol (E15) gas or other fuel blends, but this higher ethanol fuel is dangerous – and is in fact illegal – to use in your mower or in any small engine equipment. Get more information on safe fueling at www.LookBeforeYouPump.com.
- When putting away last season’s equipment, clean it and be sure to drain and responsibly dispose of fuel. Don’t leave fuel sitting in the tank for more than 30 days. Untreated gasoline (without a fuel stabilizer) left in the system will deteriorate, which may cause starting or running problems and, in some cases, damage to the fuel system.

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