



May 2009

Safety Topic

## SAFETY IN YOUR YARD



It's that time of year again. The lawn begins to green up which means you need to mow. Every summer, 30 million power lawn mowers are in use in the United States. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) data shows that each year about 400,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries from lawn tools. A few simple precautions may help you enjoy your time spent outdoors, and help you get your work completed more efficiently.

### In General:

- Before mowing, trimming or edging, read the owner's manual, and pay particular attention to safety recommendations.
- Start the mower on level ground where you have firm footing. Mow parallel to a slope. Never pull the mower toward you always push it.
- Do not tamper with built-in safety devices; they are there for good reason.
- Clear the lawn of sticks, stones, toys, and anything else that might be thrown by the mower, trimmer or edger.
- Be sure the yard is clear of children and pets. Always be aware of where others might be in the yard. A moment's distraction could mean tragedy.
- When using equipment, wear sturdy shoes with rough soles. Never go barefoot or wear sandals.
- Keep hands and feet away from the mower housing and never unclog the mower when it's running.
- Keep children away from equipment unless you're sure they're trained in how to use it and know the associated dangers.
- Don't mow, trim or edge in "blind spots". There may be hidden objects under bushes, hedges or in trees.
- Be aware of the lawn surface; watch out for holes and tree roots.
- Never leave equipment running or leave tools where others might stumble over them.

### For Gasoline Mowers:

- Fill your gas tank before you start, while the engine is still cold. Wipe up all spills. And never smoke near gasoline.
- Always turn off the mower and disconnect the spark plug wire before unclogging the machine or adjusting it. Gasoline mowers can start even when they're turned off if the blade is rotated.

### Hedge Trimmers / Weed Trimmers / Lawn Edgers:

- Wear safety eye protection. It's also a good idea to wear long pants when doing lawn work to protect from abrasions.
- Never use electric-hedge trimmers over your head. If trimmers become lodged on something, disconnect the power source before attempting to dislodge it.
- Remember weed trimmers are intended for groundwork only, not for overhead work in trees or bushes where the hazard of flying debris is a real possibility.
- When using a weed trimmer, disconnect power before advancing the line if it is a manual-feed trimmer.