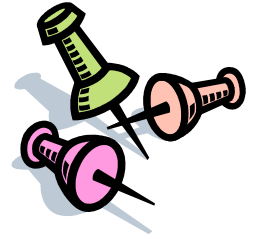




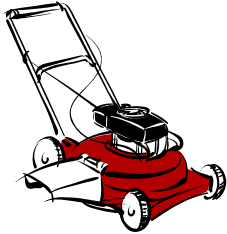
Safety Note

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



Safety Note #27

POWER LAWN MOWER SAFETY



Consumer Product Safety Commission data indicate a total of approximately 2,500 people were treated in hospitals for power lawn mower injuries during 2003. The majority of these injuries were due to operator error. California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 3563 identifies the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) safety standards power lawn mowers must meet. **Video E-082 Groundskeeping Safety is available from the ANR Environmental Health and Safety Library at <http://safety.ucanr.org>.**

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the power lawn mower operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the power lawn mower for damage or disrepair and make sure all shields and guards are securely in place.
- If a power lawn mower fails the pre-use inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the mower from service by attaching a red tag that states "DO NOT USE." Complete red tag with appropriate information.

Operating Precautions

- Always wear safety glasses or goggles when using a power lawn mower. In addition, hearing protection should also be used since engine noise from a power lawn mower is at about 90 decibels.
- Wear long pants and sturdy shoes (i.e., no sneakers or sandals) when using a power lawn mower. Do not wear loose clothing.
- Always start a power lawn mower outside. Do not operate a power lawn mower inside an enclosed space (i.e., sheds or garages) where carbon monoxide exhaust gas can accumulate.
- Prior to starting, inspect the area to be mowed and pick up all loose objects (i.e., sticks, stones, pieces of glass/metal, etc.) that could be thrown by the power lawn mower.
- Never fuel the power lawn mower when the engine/muffler is hot. Use a rag to wipe up fuel spills.
- Shut off the power lawn mower engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before performing mechanical adjustments, maintenance, or repairs or clearing/unclogging the discharge chute or underside of the mowing deck.
- Exercise caution when mowing near trees or shrubs with low hanging branches.
- Always shut the power lawn mower off before emptying the grass clippings catch bag.
- Never pull a power lawn mower behind you. Always push the power lawn mower.
- Mow across the slope of a bank or hill.
- Always shut off a power lawn mower before leaving it unattended.