

Mower and Hedge Trimmer Safety

Lawn care equipment, such as mowers and hedge trimmers, can pose significant hazards in the workplace. Tragically, a serious incident can occur if steps are not taken to identify and avoid or eliminate equipment-related hazards.

Employers are required to provide safe lawn care equipment and many types of personal protective equipment, such as eye and hearing protection. Employers shall not issue or permit the use of unsafe equipment, such as mowers without rollover protective structures or seat belts. Employers must also train workers in the proper use and handling of equipment and protective gear, and ensure that they are used consistent with the training. The training must permit the workers to recognize the hazards associated with the different types of equipment used and the necessary safety precautions.



Mower Safe Work Practices

- Wear the eye and hearing protection provided by the employer, along with long pants and steel toe shoes.
- Look for and remove debris, and identify hazards, i.e., ditches, before mowing.
- Make sure discharge chutes are down at all times.
- Use the protective gear in the equipment provided by the employer, including the rollover protective structures (ROPS) with the bar raised and the seat belt.
- Use walk-behind mowers on wet grass and hillsides, and around lakes and ponds.
- Use a funnel or a flexible hose when pouring fuel into the mower.
- Never attempt to fuel a running or HOT mower.

Remember

- Do not discharge toward nearby buildings, people, animals or traffic.
- Never reach into or beneath a running mower.
- Do not operate equipment aggressively or without proper instruction.
- Do not tamper with or destroy safety features and/or safety switches.
- Never smoke or have an open flame near fuel.
- Do not lift a mower without the aid of a mower jack or equipment lift. Lifting a mower by hand could cause serious back injuries.

Hedge Trimmer Safe Work Practices

- Wear the hand, eye and hearing protection provided by the employer, along with work boots and long pants.
- Use a funnel or a flexible hose when pouring fuel into the trimmer.



- Never attempt to fuel a running or HOT trimmer.
- Keep both hands on hedge trimmer at all times.
- Always operate equipment with your right hand on the throttle.
- Keep at least 10 feet between you and others.
- Use caution near windows. The oscillating nature of hedge trimmer blades can easily break even thick glass.

Remember

- You have the right to raise safety concerns with your employer without fear of retaliation. For example, you can tell your employer that you are too fatigued to do the job safely, as most hedge trimmer injuries occur because the operator's hand slips and/or the machine is dropped because the operator is fatigued.
- Do not operate equipment within 10 feet of where the machine was fueled.
- Never sharpen or try to pull debris out of a running hedge trimmer.
- Do not modify or remove safety guards. Never operate the equipment with damaged guards.
- Do not operate on a ladder or in any position except with your feet on the ground.
- Your employer must ensure that you are protected from the effects of excessive heat by:
 - ✓ Providing water and the opportunity to drink it frequently, so you do not get dehydrated
 - ✓ Allowing you to take frequent rest periods with water breaks in the shade or in air-conditioned areas
 - ✓ Providing opportunity to work during the cooler periods of the day (such as early morning or evening)
 - ✓ Advising you of your exact location, in case you need to call 911
- Also during excessive heat conditions:
 - ✓ Watch out for your co-workers
 - ✓ Wear a hat and light-colored clothing

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, [employers are responsible](#) for providing a safe and healthy workplace and [workers have rights](#). OSHA can help answer questions or concerns from employers and workers. OSHA's [On-site Consultation Program](#) offers free and confidential advice to small and medium-sized businesses, with priority given to high-hazard worksites. For more information, contact your [regional or area OSHA office](#), call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), or visit www.osha.gov.

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