MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Grass Trimmer, Brush Cutter
&
Leaf Blowers Safety Tips

Wasn't it wonderful with the invention of grass cutters and brush cutters? I remember my first purchase of a "weed eater' as we called them. Little did I know that "weed eater" was a brand of grass trimmer.

As in many new inventions and scientific innovations, when they first hit the market, they were termed as a luxury yard appliance. It didn't take many years for them to become a necessity for yard work of any size. The U.S. Consumer Product Commission estimates that there has been approximately 4,600 hospital emergencies associated with grass cutters and/or brush cutters, and power lawn edgers.

About 1/3rd of these emergencies were eye injuries. Using safety goggles could have greatly reduced this number. There are other precautions that we can practice that will make this type of work more enjoyable and reduce the potential for injury, such as:

- Read, understand and follow the instructions owner's manual.
- Use both hands in operating the machine and hold it firmly.
- Always check to see that the cutting head is adjusting correctly and is tight.
- Replace any bent, warped, damaged, dull cutting apparatus.
- Check to see that the throttle springs back to the idle position.
- Select equipment to be sure that it has anti-vibration components.

PROPER CLOTHING IS NECESSARY FOR THE CUTTING TASK-

- Wear well-fitting and sturdy jeans, overalls, or long pants.
- Heavy-duty non-slip gloves.
- Safety boots or shoes with non-slip soles.
- Wear safety goggles, face shields, or safety glasses.
- Wear either ear plugs or ear muffs for sound protection.

SAFEY TIPS WHEN USING TRIMMERS OR CUTTERS-

Set up:

- Make sure that shields, guards, and other safety devices are in place and working properly.
- Replace or tighten all loose or damaged parts or guards.
- Make sure the muffler is in good condition. In dry weather, it is a good idea to install a fire-safe muffler.
- Keep people away from starting and operating areas.
- Clear the work area of rocks, glass, metal or other debris.
- Refuel the engine before you start to work while it is cool. If you have to refuel while working, let the engine cool down before you do refuel.

Operation:

- If using an electric trimmer or cutter, follow the instructions written in the manufacturer's operating manual.
- Start the engine on firm ground or other solid surfaces.
- Maintain good balance and a secure footing when operating.
- Adjust the harness and hand grip to suit your work positions.
- Use the unit at ground level. Never cut or trim with the unit above your shoulders.
- Shut the engine off before cleaning the head of clutter.
- Stop the engine before laying the machine down.
- Disconnect the spark plug if you leave the unit unattended.
- Secure the cutter before transporting to prevent spilling the fuel or damaging the machine.
- Keep the cutter tool covered with the carrying guard.

OTHER TIPS-

- Do not leave the cutter unattended while it is running.
- Do not wear short pants or short sleeves.
- Do not use rigid blades in stony areas.
- Do not overreach. Keep proper footing and balance at all times.
- Do not repair damaged attachments - discard them and replace with new ones.

SAFETY TIPS FOR USING LEAF BLOWERS-

The set up and operation of leaf blowers are very similar to grass trimmers/brush cutters as far as start-up and safety precautions.

Additionally the following are tips deal specifically with leaf blowers:

- ✓ The first tip is important (as all of them): Be careful how and where you aim the blower. It has a lot of force and can blow hazardous objects, which can be a problem to the operator or others.
- ✓ Before you start to blow, clear the area of bystanders, pets, and other objects that might be a potential hazard.
- ✓ Always wear eye protection when operating a leaf blower. A small rock can blind you.
- ✓ Hearing protection is always recommended when using a blower.
- ✓ Always wear a mask in dirty or dusty areas and in areas of dampness or decay where mold and mildew has begun to grow. Mold spores are an inhalation hazard.
- ✓ Always start and run the unit in an upright position.
- ✓ Never operate the unit without the tubing attached.
- ✓ Always direct the debris away from the direction of people, animals or objects. It could rebound or ricochet.
- ✓ Never use the blower to spread or mist chemicals, fertilizers or other toxic substances.
- ✓ Never attempt to use the blower while on a ladder, in trees, or on rooftops, or other unstable surfaces.

Lawn appliances are only as good as you allow them to be through proper maintenance and careful, focused use.

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Excerpts: www.ccohs.ca/oshaanswers/saf_landscaping/grass_trimmer_html
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~~SAFETY TOOLS ARE YOUR BEST TOOLS~~
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ALERT TODAY! ~~~~~~~~ALIVE