Lawn Mowing Essentials

Knowing and observing a few basic safety measures will help you effectively care for your lawn, while minimizing injury to yourself and innocent bystanders. Given the potential for injury, the following methods will help you maintain a safe environment while operating lawn equipment.

Before You Start

- Know your equipment. Thoroughly read the owner’s manuals and review them annually.
- If you haven’t recently serviced your mower, make it a priority. Perform regular maintenance as outlined by the manufacturer.
- Leave all safety features intact.
- Clear the area to be mowed. Remove sticks, stones, wire, and other debris. Set the blade high enough to prevent an excessive amount of debris from being thrown – this is especially important on rough terrain.
- Keep children and pets out of the mowing area.
- Cut grass only when conditions are safe. Don’t mow after daylight hours or when the grass is wet and slippery.

Safe Mowing Practices

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Steel-toe shoes with non-slip soles, close-fitting pants and top, safety glasses, and hearing protection are recommended.

For walk-behind mowers…

- Make sure your footing is secure before starting the mower and maneuvering around obstacles.
- Always mow sideways across slopes and banks, not up and down.
- Don’t pull a walk-behind mower toward you.
- If your mower runs out of fuel, wait until the engine cools before refueling.

For riding mowers…

- Tipping or losing control is a hazard associated with riding mowers. Take special care to:
  - Reduce speed before taking sharp turns.
  - Watch for dips, holes, bumps, sprinkler heads, and other items that may be obscured by grass.
  - On slopes, mow up and down (not across), reduce speed, and avoid turns.
- Never carry passengers, including children.