



# 5-minute safety talk

## 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.

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

### Safe Mowing Practices

- Start the mower on clear, level, and firm ground.
- Learn how to stop the machine quickly. If possible, buy a mower with a kill switch that stops the engine when you release the handle.
- Don't leave a running mower unattended.
- Never put your hands or feet near moving parts – especially blades – while the engine is running.
- If the mower becomes clogged with grass or other debris, turn off the power before clearing the debris.
- When cleaning, repairing, or inspecting a gasoline powered mower, disconnect the spark plug-wire. A hot gasoline engine can start on its own if the spark plug is connected.

### 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.

Visit [nsc.org/members](https://www.nsc.org/members)  
for more safety tips

