

# What You Need To Know Before You Mow

## *Protect Children And Adults By Preventing Lawnmower Accidents*

With the snow blower packed away for the winter, it's the lawnmower that's now the tool of choice for many in the spring and summer months. Pushing or riding a grass cutter across your lawn may seem routine, but it can be very dangerous for you and those around you if simple precautions aren't taken to maximize safety.

In fact, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that each year about 75 people are killed and more than 20,000 are injured on or near riding lawn mowers and are sent to clinics and emergency rooms. "You may not think of it as a household hazard, but a lawn mower can be one of the most dangerous pieces of equipment around a home if it's not used properly," says agent Eric Nier. "Only a small percentage of injuries are caused by mechanical failure and most are caused by human error."

To help prevent lawnmower accidents and injuries, Eric Nier Insurance recommends the following safety tips:

- **Become familiar with your lawnmower.** Read the owner's manual before using the mower for the first time. Note all safety and operating instructions. Learn the controls so that you can act instantly in an emergency.
- **Wear proper clothing to protect your body.** Do not mow the lawn in your bare feet or while wearing sandals. Always wear non-slip shoes that grip the ground well. Long pants help protect your legs from objects that may be thrown from under the mower.
- **Never leave a lawnmower running unattended.** A mower left running unattended can be fascinating to a child. If the mower has an electric start, the key should never be left in the ignition.
- **Never operate a lawnmower when children are nearby.** Children should never be in a yard while you're mowing and they should never ride on the mower.
- **Always start the lawnmower outdoors.** Never operate a mower where carbon monoxide can collect, such as in a closed garage, storage shed, or basement.
- **Police the area.** Be sure the lawn is free of tree limbs, rocks, wires, and other debris that can get caught up in the blades.
- **Avoid contact with the lawnmower's blade.** The blade is the most dangerous part of the mower. To perform its task efficiently, the blade must be sharp and travel at a high speed. It can cause serious injury if a hand or foot gets under the mower while the engine is running. Never attempt to unclog or work on a lawnmower while the engine is running.

- **Disconnect the sparkplug wire.** Any time it is necessary to reach under the mower, disconnect the spark plug wire to ensure that the engine cannot start. It takes a little extra time, but not as long as it does to recover from a serious injury.
- **Check for frayed or cut wiring.** Often, a lawnmower's blade can cut the wires of an electric lawnmower. Keep an eye on the wiring as you move the mower and check for frayed or cut wiring every time you mow.