

Beware the prowling lawn mower!



With at least 50 million power mowers whirring away in the United States, hospitals expect more than 125,000 patients to be rushed into emergency rooms this year with cuts, bruises, contusions, sprains, fractures—and worse—inflicted by the rotary and reel blades designed to keep lawns in trim.

The Department of Safety and Research of the Combined Insurance Company of America reports that most of the injured are victims of their own carelessness. While operators of mowers are the principal sufferers from their own negligence, the toll also includes innocent bystanders, mainly women and children who become targets of mishandled mowers and the sticks and stones they fling at bullet speed.

Murphy vetoes car policy

Oakland Executive Daniel T. Murphy has vetoed a "county car policy" resolution passed April 28 by the Board of Commissioners.

At the same time, he said most of the terms of the resolution are being met, or will be in the near future.

"This resolution is an attempt by the board of commissioners to take control of administrative matters," Murphy said. "In vetoing it, I am

People have been killed or maimed when riding mowers have backed into them or flung stones. Operators of mowers have lost fingers and toes—and arms and legs—because of negligence and some have been crushed to death under overturned equipment.

The Federal Consumer Product Safety Commission cautions that driving a mower requires many of the same skills called for in operating an automobile. It is just as important to study the instructions that come with a mower as it is to pore over the manual in the glove compartment of a new car.

The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, which compiles statistics on injuries treated at hospitals, says that 66 per cent of all mower injuries occur when someone touches a

moving blade. Twenty per cent result from objects hurled by mowers. The rest are due mainly to electric shock, burns, problems with steering, stability, brakes and the drive-trains of riding mowers.

The Bureau of Product Safety of the Food and Drug Administration finds most injuries occur when operators try to unclog blades or cutters without shutting off the engine. Many are hurt when they stumble or fall against moving parts. A number of people are blinded by foreign objects thrown into their eyes.

To help reduce the toll taken by mowers, the Combined Insurance safety experts recommend the following precautions:

- Never allow children or even other adults to operate your mower unless they fully understand its operation.
- Never allow young children to operate a mower nor allow a child to ride with you on your mower.
- Before turning on a mower, clear the lawn of objects such as sticks and stones that can be hurled by the blades.

•Concentrate on what you are doing. Never leave the mower running. Never remove grass or twigs without turning off the motor.

•Mow only in daylight or good artificial light.

•Wear sturdy shoes—not sneakers (and never go barefoot). Don't close-fitting clothing that cannot become entangled in the machinery.

•Handle gasoline with care. Never remove the gas tank cap or add fuel while the engine is running or hot. Let the engine cool before refueling. Wipe up all spills. Never smoke while refueling.

•Try to mow only when grass is dry; wet grass is slippery and hazardous.

•When using a walking mower, never try to pull it backward, test it run over your feet.

•When putting a riding mower into reverse, take special precautions to make sure no one, particularly a child, is behind you.

•Be careful when mowing slopes and hills. Mow up and down, not back and forth.

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