Landscaping – Rotary Power Lawn Mowers – Fact Sheets



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO BEFORE USING A POWER LAWN MOWER?

Training

- Read, understand, and follow the manufacturer's operating manual.
- Make sure you have been fully trained on how to operate the mower. For example, your supervisor should demonstrate how to use the mower, and observe you working with it until satisfied that you can operate it safely.
- Know the controls and how to stop the machine quickly.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Wear long pants, close-fitting clothes and non-slip safety toe footwear (no bare feet, sandals or sneakers!)
- Wear hearing and eye protection.
- Wear protective gloves when attaching or cleaning the blade.
- Portable music players are not recommended since they can be a distraction to the operator.

Preparing the area

- Check the yard before mowing – clear the work area of rocks, bottles and debris that might be thrown by the blades.
- Keep people (especially children) and pets away from the work area. A mower can throw objects in any direction.
- Do not mow wet grass (walking on wet grass is a slipping hazard for you and more likely to cause the mower to clog).

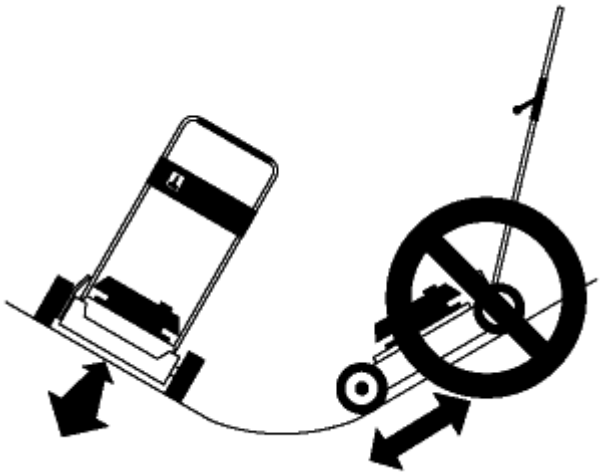
Preparing the mower

- Inspect the mower before starting it. Make certain that the blade is sharp and secured.
- Replace thin or worn blades.
- Make sure the blade stopping controls are effective. Adjust as necessary.
- Make sure that shields and other guards, such as the rear drag shield and the discharge deflector, are in place and working properly.
- Adjust wheel height before starting mower.

- Turn off the engine before adding fuel. Fill the engine when it is cool, not while it is still hot after it has been used. Use a funnel to prevent spillage on the engine. Fuel up outdoors, then wipe up all spills.
- Do not smoke when refueling!
- Restart engine at least 8 metres (25 feet) from where you refueled to avoid igniting vapours.
- Store gasoline safely – outside and away from any heat source.
- If using an electric lawn mower, use the recommended grounded extension cord, and follow the applicable electrical safety procedures described in Powered Hand Tools – Basic Safety for Electric Tools.
- If using a cordless electric (battery-powered) lawn mower, use the recommended battery and follow safety procedures in the manufacturer's operating manual.

What should you do when using a power lawn mower?

- Start the lawn mower outdoors.
- If your electric mower isn't labelled "double insulated," never plug it into anything but a grounded (3-prong) outlet. Use a ground fault interrupter (GFI) for additional safety.
- Set mower at the highest cutting level when operating on rough ground.
- Always push the mower in a forward direction.
- Watch for hidden hazards such as holes, roots, drain pipes, chains, ropes, and insect nests.
- Cut the throttle to idle and make sure the mower will not roll when stopping to pick up debris.
- Proceed slowly into tall, heavy grass to avoid choking the mower or stalling the motor.
- Use caution around low hanging branches and shrubs.
- Operate a "push" mower standing up straight, not bent over. Do not pull the mower toward you (or your feet).
- Mow across slopes. Your feet are less likely to slide under the mower and the mower cannot roll back. (This method is opposite from operating riding lawn mowers that are driven straight and down inclines.)
- Make turns slowly and gradually.
- Shut off mower, ensuring the blade has stopped rotating, and disconnect the spark plug wire (or disconnect an electric lawn mower) before tipping the mower by the handle to expose the underside for maintenance.
- Stop the lawn mower immediately if the blade hits any hard object, inspect the blade, and make the necessary repairs before using the mower again.
- Keep hands away from the blades. Use a stick to unclog or remove grass from the mower (after you have turned off the mower).
- Turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before removing the grass catcher, unclogging the discharge chute, or crossing gravel paths, roads, or other areas.
- Mow away from the power cord if using an electric powered lawn mower.
- Disconnect electric lawn mowers, turn off and remove safety key on battery-operated lawn mowers or turn off gas-powered mowers immediately after use and before unclogging the blades, or before doing repair work or maintenance.
- Take frequent rest breaks, especially on hot days.



What should you not do when using a power lawn mower?

- Do not reach under machine. Disconnect the spark plug wire before sharpening, replacing and cleaning the blade or any part of the mower.
- Do not leave a running mower unattended.
- Do not touch hot motor parts.
- Do not spray cold water on a hot engine.
- Do not fuel the mower while the engine is running or when engine is hot.
- Do not lift or tilt the mower while it is running.
- Do not leave blades rotating motor running when crossing a gravelled area.
- Do not run mower over stones or hard objects like pipes, rocks or sidewalk edges.
- Do not start and stop on slopes. Do not make sudden changes in speed or direction.
- Do not remove the grass catcher or unclog the chute while the motor is running.
- Do not point the discharge chute at people, animals, buildings, windows or glass doors.
- Do not walk backwards while operating a lawn mower to avoid tripping.
- Do not use if you are impaired.
- Do not use in bad weather.

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