

Grounds Keeping Safety

- Tools
- Refueling Equipment
- Types of Equipment
- Machinery Hazards

Safety Tips from the WorkSafe People

Grounds Keeping Tools

- Make tool selections based on the task, your body size, shape and strength
- Remove, repair or replace all broken or damaged tools
- Check the handles — are they securely fastened? Is the finish smooth?
- Keep cutting tools sharp
- Put the tools away when the job is finished
- Protect cutting edges. Don't carry sharp or pointed tools in your pocket unless the tool is in a sheath. Even better, carry all hand tools in a toolbox or tool belt.

Refueling Equipment

- Fill the fuel tank before starting a job
- Check the area where you are standing — will it give you good footing?
- Remove the fuel cap slowly, holding it at the semi-locked position until pressure is released
- Permit the nozzle to empty by keeping it in the filler opening for a few moments after shutting off the fuel flow
- Check the fuel cap vent for any clogging
- Store fuel in an approved self closing safety can (red container) – Fuels stored in open containers can vaporize. Vapors can ignite or explode if an ignition source is present.
- Have fire extinguishers and other firefighting equipment nearby
- If refueling is necessary — turn off the engine and permit it to cool
- Do not smoke or have an open flame in the area of refueling — gas fumes are heavier than air and will hang near the container — gas vapors can burn! ENFORCE THE NO SMOKING RULE!
- Any spilled fuel must be wiped up and permitted to dry before starting the engine. Store fuel soaked rags in a metal container with a tight fitting lid. This keeps oxygen away, reducing the chance of a fire.
- If your clothing catches fire — stop, drop and roll!

Types of Equipment

Grinders and Chippers

- Read the operator's manual and complete training on proper use and safety precautions prior to using a grinder or chipper.
- Wear a face shield, safety glasses, hand protection, hearing, and head protection
- Keep shirt sleeves buttoned and shirts tucked into pants
- Do not work alone when using a grinder or chipper
- Test all safety shut off devices before operating the grinder or chipper
- Before removing any type of clogged materials or making any adjustments, turn off the equipment — prevent operation by removing the key or locking out the controls. The engines powerful enough and knives are sharp enough to slice / grind through fresh wood, branches, and limbs. The powerful engines and sharp knives can pull a worker into the point of operation. Workers should never operate this equipment without training.
- Use longer pieces to feed small, short pieces of wood by hand
- Position the Grinder or chipper so that worker do not have to stand on slopes when feeding material into the machine
- Keep the area around the chipper or grinder free from tripping hazards
- Put up warning signs to keep the public a safe distance from the work area

Powered Hedge Trimmer

- Before operating the equipment — read, understand, and follow the manufacturer's operating manual
- If a ladder is being used follow proper ladder safety policies and procedures. Before worker begins work, they should be properly trained. Moving ladders can cause extra work and may lead to additional injuries. Improper set up of ladder can also cause fall accidents. CHECK FOR OVERHEAD POWER LINES! If work is being performed near power lines, always use wooden or fiberglass ladders. NEVER USE METAL LADDERS!
- Wear eye protection
- Check the area you are going to trim for foreign objects
- Keep the power cord behind you at all times — leave enough slack for normal work movement
- Use both hands to hold and move the tool

Safety Tips from the WorkSafe People

Garden Tractors

- Before operating the equipment read, understand and follow the manufacturer's operating manual – All drivers of equipment should receive formal training
- Check the oil and fuel levels before starting
- Check the placement and working condition of the shields and guards – never disengage any safety interlock switch.
- Wear close-fitting clothing, sturdy non-slip footwear, and when necessary, eye, ear and head protection
- Increase stability — drive the tractor up and down slopes rather than sideways
- Have a qualified mechanic regularly service the tractor, and replace or tighten all loose or broken parts
- Let the engine idle down a few minutes before turning it off
- When operating the tractor, always keep an eye open for children at play
- Only one person is allowed to ride the tractor- NO RIDERS! This must be strictly enforced
- Never park a tractor where it could endanger the public
- When leaving a tractor unattended, even for a short time, turn it off and take the keys
- Before you start the power source, be sure the PTO (Power Take Off) is disengaged. Do not drive with power take-off (PTO) running if it is not being used. If the PTO shaft separated, immediately disengage the PTO and stop the unit. Replace damaged or missing PTO Shields – People cannot react quick enough to pull away from the spinning shaft of the PTO, and most clothing is strong enough to pull a person into the rotating shaft. Serious and more frequently, death is the end result of accidents involving Power Take Off (PTO).
- Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS) and seat belts should be used together. For tractors not equipped with Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS), check with the manufacture or dealer for availability of ROPS retro fit kits. If they are available, the tractor should be retro fitted. Install and use seat belts on tractors with ROPS.
- Blades
 - Avoid hitting obstructions with the tractor
 - Operate the tractor at a moderate speed so stopping quickly is possible
 - Lower the blade when the machine is parked

Safety Tips from the WorkSafe People

Power Lawnmowers

- Before operating — be familiar with the controls and know how to stop the mower quickly
- Inspect the mower prior to starting — is the blade sharp?
- Wear non-slip safety toe footwear and hearing protection
- Clear the cutting area of rocks, bottles, and debris that might be thrown by the blades
- Look for hidden hazards such as holes, roots and drain pipes
- Set the cutting deck higher when mowing rough ground
- Operate the mower from a standing position — not bent over
- Mow across slopes — feet are less likely to slide under the mower and the mower cannot roll back
- Disconnect the spark plug wire before servicing
- Do not make wheel height adjustments while the motor is running
- Do not permit blades to rotate when crossing a graveled area
- Never mow when the surface is too slippery for your footing
- Never use an electrical mower on wet grass

Riding Lawnmowers

- Wear hearing and head protection
- Clear the work area of debris that may be thrown by the blades
- Set the mower at the highest cutting point when operating on rough ground
- Mow up and down slopes rather than sideways for greater stability — unless mower is counterbalanced
- If the mower runs into a rock or stump, stop and check the blades
- Disengage power to attachments and stop the motor before leaving the operator's seat
- Mount and dismount the mower when it is not running
- Never carry passengers

Grass Trimmers and Brush Cutters

- Before operating the equipment, make sure you are trained in the proper use of it
- Wear sturdy and snug fitting overalls, jeans or long pants
- Wear heavy-duty, non-slip gloves
- Use safety boots with non-slip soles
- Eye protection will be needed — goggles, or face shield and safety glasses
- Wear hearing protection

Safety Tips from the WorkSafe People

- Make sure the cutter is tight before turning off the piece of equipment
- Hold the unit firmly with both hands
- Check the throttle, make sure it springs back to the idle position
- Always keep people away from the area being trimmed
- Maintain a good balance and secure footing when operating
- When transporting the cutter, secure it to prevent fuel spillage and damage
- Stop the engine before putting the cutter down
- Use the cutter at ground level
- Keep the cutter tool covered with the carrying guard

Snow Throwers

- Follow the manufacturer's operating manual
- Use only the attachments and accessories approved by the manufacturer
- Wear close-fitting clothing appropriate for cold weather exposure
- Disengage all clutches and shift into neutral before starting the motor
- Check the tightness of shear bolts frequently
- Walk slowly, maintain good footing, and keep a firm hold on the handles while operating
- Change directions slowly on slopes
- Keep clear of the discharge at all times
- Stop the motor after striking an object — remove the spark plug and thoroughly inspect the snow thrower for any damage
- Run the machine a few minutes after throwing snow to prevent freeze-up of the collector or impeller
- Permit the engine to cool before storing the snow thrower inside
- When leaving the snow thrower — disengage the power, shift into neutral, set the parking brake, stop the motor, and remove the key
- Never make any adjustments with the motor running
- Do not run the motor indoors, except when starting the motor and transporting the snow thrower in or out of the building
- Do not clear steep slopes
- Make sure all guards are in place and operating correctly
- Operate the snow thrower only when there is good visibility or light

Machinery Hazards

Shear Points

- Shear points are created when the edges of two objects move to cut material. These points are found on many types of equipment.
- Stay clear of shear points when the machinery is operating.
- When adjusting or cleaning machinery, turn off all the power and use lockout if it applies.

Crush Points

- Crush points are created when two objects move toward each other.
- Avoid placing body parts between any objects that are moving toward each other.

Pinch Points

- Pinch points are created when two objects move together, with at least one of them moving in a circle (e.g., belt, chain and gear drives).
- Keep hands, hair and clothing away from pinch points.
- Guard all pinch points.
- Never try to remove debris from operating machinery parts — stop the machine first.

Wrap Points

- Wrap points are created around rotating machine components.
- Small nicks, mud, or rust on shafts increase the chance of a wrap.
- Guard all wrap points.