



## ***Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries***

**Rear-engine riding mowers and lawn tractors are self-propelled and are generally designed for mowing grass. Rear-engine riding mowers are used for lawns up to an acre in size while lawn tractors are generally used for areas**

**larger than one acre.**

Although both may offer options such as a sweeper or snow thrower attachments, they are not powerful enough to pull a plow or other earthwork attachment.

Garden tractors are designed to supply power for home lawn, garden, and yard attachments such as moldboard plows, tillers, cultivators, snow throwers, sweepers, leaf mulchers, etc. Garden tractors are generally used for areas larger than two acres.

Walk-behind mowers should be used in areas that can't be mowed with a larger mower.

### **Safety Features**

- Operator presence control systems shut off the blades when the operator gets off the machine, rises from the seat, or is in reverse gear.
- Interlocks ensure the engine cannot start while the mower is in gear or the blades are engaged.

### **Safety Protection for Operators**

- Clothing protects the mower operator from thrown objects and sun exposure. Dress properly for the job, wearing long pants, and close-fitting clothes. Tie back long hair and don't wear anything that could become entangled in the moving parts of the mower. Always wear sturdy, non-slip soled shoes or boots.
- Safety glasses or goggles protect the eyes from dust, dirt, trash, and small rocks thrown by the blade.
- Earplugs protect hearing from engine and blade noises.
- Don't operate equipment under the influence of medication because it can impair one's ability to safely use the equipment.
- Protect hands when handling blades and other items which might be sharp, contain nicks, or have metal burrs on the edges.
- Shut off the engine and remove the battery cable when making any repairs or adjustments.

### **Before Operating**

- Read the operator's manual to find out where the controls are located and how they function. Every mower is different. Check for additional safety instructions in the operator's manual and know how to stop the machine quickly.

- Before you mow, walk the area and pick up objects lying on the lawn. Tools, cans, bottles, wire, rocks, sticks, twigs, and limbs can be hazards to the operator, bystanders, and the mower itself.
- Check to see if the blades are sharp.
- Check fuel level and engine oil.
- Check mowing height.
- Check for any loose belts or parts.
- Ensure that shields and guards are in place. Don't remove or disable guards or other safety devices.

### Fueling Safety

- Use the proper type of fuel - gasoline or diesel.
- Don't overfill the tank and leave room for expansion.
- Don't add any fuel if the engine is still hot. Let it cool down before re-fueling.
- Never light a match or smoke around gasoline.

### Keep People at a Safe Distance

- Keep people at a safe distance from the mower while it is operating - at least a 60 foot radius.
- Disengage the blade and shut off the engine when approached by anyone.

### Operating Riding Mowers and Tractors Carefully

- Always start the machine from the operator's seat. Never start the machine while standing beside it.
- Riding mowers and tractors are one-person machines. Operate from the driver seat only and never carry passengers. Keep both feet on the machine at all times.
- Take care not to throw a unit in gear accidentally, as it can jerk ahead possibly throwing you off the seat.
- Drive slowly and cautiously. Watch for holes, drains, roots on the ground, and other low-hanging overhead hazards.
- When operating the machine on uneven ground, use extreme care. Decrease your speed when going down slopes or around sharp corners to prevent tripping. Maintain minimum ground speed and make turns wide and gradual. Avoid sudden starts, stops, turns.
- Reduce speed and keep the mower in gear on slopes so the engine can act as a brake. Mow across the face of gentle slopes. Mow straight up and down slopes greater than five degrees. Never operate a riding mower on slopes more than fifteen degrees or on wet or damp surfaces.
- A riding mower may overturn if it begins spinning on the uphill side of a slope. If the uphill mower wheel spins when going across a slope, stop or turn down the slope immediately.
- Disengage the blade before traveling over gravel or paved surfaces. Look behind the machine before backing up.
- Avoid mowing in reverse gear.
- Mow counter clockwise in most cases, to discharge grass onto the area already mowed. Never blow grass in the direction of traffic or bystanders.
- Stop and inspect the blades and shaft if the mower runs into a rock or

stump.

- Damaged blades can vibrate and become loose.
- Don't remove the grass catcher or unclog the chute while the mower is running.
- Never jump off or dismount from moving equipment. Observe proper shutdown procedures before dismounting.

### Shut Down of Machine

- Idle down the engine a few minutes, allowing it to cool down. Wait for all blade movements to stop before leaving the seat.
- Lower raised components, shut off the engine, and remove the key when parking or stepping away from the mower.
- Always clean the mower after use. Don't spray cold water on a hot engine.

### Keep Mowers in Peak Operating Condition

Inspect the mower periodically for potential hazards such as loose belts and missing or damaged guards. Check the mower for accumulations of grass, leaves or excessive grease to reduce fire hazard. Get the advice of a mechanic for problems. Conduct routine maintenance and inspections.

*Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.*

