

Lawn Mower Safety

It's that time of year again. The lawn begins to green up which means you need to mow. Every summer, 30 million power lawn mowers are in use in the United States. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) data shows that each year about 400,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries from lawn tools. Children under the age of 14 and adults over the age of 44 are most prone to injury.

Since nearly all mower accidents results from human error, it is important to recognize potential mowing hazards before they happen. A few simple precautions may help you enjoy your time spent outdoors, and help you get your work completed more efficiently.

Review the operator's manual that comes with the mower. You should become familiar with the mower's safety features, including how to stop the mower quickly in case of an emergency. Keep all safety shields and mower shut-off mechanisms in place. These are provided by the manufacturer to insure your safety.

Fill your gas tank before you start, while the engine is still cold. Wipe up all spills. And never smoke near gasoline.

Clear the area for rocks, branches, wires and other objects.

Dress properly. Slippery shoes and loose or dangling clothing can be dangerous.

Use eye protection and hearing protection devices.

Don't allow children near the mower; you'll prevent the possibility of their getting injured by flying objects.

Keep your hands and feet away from the mower's blades. Never reach under the mower for any reason while the mower is in operation. Make all adjustments with the motor off.

Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.

Just as you shouldn't drink and drive, you shouldn't drink and mow. Don't operate a mower when your reflexes are impaired by any substance.

Drink plenty of liquids and take occasional breaks while mowing on unseasonably hot days to help avoid heat illness.

Other items to remember if you have an electric lawn mower:

Don't use on wet grass.

Use an extension cord designed for outdoor use and rated for the power needs of your mower.

Reduce the risk of cutting the cord while you're mowing by starting to mow in the area nearest the electrical outlet, then mow away from the outlet so the power cord will be behind.

If you do hit a foreign object or have a mower malfunction, remember to turn off the mower and disconnect the power cord before inspecting for damage. ⚠

Incorporate Safety into Your Employee Orientation

An effective safety program requires the involvement and participation of all employees. This process begins the first day a new worker is hired. Workers immediately begin to formulate opinions about the organization, management, supervisors and other employees.

How can you communicate your organization's safety policies, practices and procedures to the newest members of your team? Start by incorporating safety and health information into your existing employee orientation process. Safety orientation provides a unique opportunity to make a positive statement about the value the organization places on safety. A well designed safety orientation will provide newly assigned employees with the skills and abilities to safely perform their jobs while they are adapting to the new situation, environment or new job responsibilities.

Take orientation beyond standard discussion of benefit packages, policies and tours. Introduce essential safety subjects. This should then be followed up with department specific job safety information by the team leader or supervisor.

Some suggested safety topics include:

- General safety rules and policies
- Housekeeping standards
- Proper lifting, hand tool safety, and ergonomic techniques
- Equipment safety
- Emergency procedures
- Proper clothing on the job and for specific tasks
- Location of MSDS binder with a brief review about MSDS
- How to report accidents, injuries and near-misses
- Location of all safety supplies/eye wash and shower locations
- General lockout/tagout procedures
- Medical facilities support/first aid
- Medical response procedures - heart attack, Bloodborne pathogens, etc.
- Fire prevention and protection

Safety orientation is a specific type of training that supports goals to improve on-the-job safety performance and every employee should be offered appropriate safety training based on their work environment, job responsibilities and potential hazards. Ongoing training should also be provided to experienced employees that have been transferred or assumed new job assignments.

As always, the NJSBAIG Loss Control Department can help you with all of your safety needs. Call Marty Kalbach at 609-386-6060 extension 3024 for more information. ☎

*Resource:
National Safety Council*

Hazards of Coffee Drinking

Despite the warning of the hazards of too much caffeine, more people are drinking coffee than ever before. Specialty coffee shops are jammed with customers stopping in for their morning ritual of a double mocha latte or whatever style or flavor they like from the many choices available. Does anyone drink just plain coffee anymore?

A little coffee can be good, but too much is not. Besides addiction to caffeine, drinking large amounts of coffee (5 or more cups per day) may lead to:

Loss of sleep

Loss of calcium in the body

Anxiety and depression

Irregular and rapid heartbeat

High blood pressure

Stomach ulcers

Headache and jitteriness

Withdrawal symptoms from cutting back are almost as debilitating, and include headaches, nervousness, irritability, depression, and drowsiness. If you are trying to quit a coffee habit:

Withdraw slowly from coffee consumption. Decrease your consumption by a half a cup a day, or mix regular with decaffeinated coffee.

Switch to decaffeinated coffee or beverages in the evening.

Add milk to your coffee to lessen caffeine intake and replace calcium you may be losing by drinking coffee.

Enjoy your coffee, but be aware of the hazards, as well as the “perks.” ☺

Claims Corner Article:

Managed Care Supplies

From time to time you will need to replenish your Managed Care stock. Listed below are your contacts needed to retrieve your supplies.

Qualcare Managed Care Cards:

Guy Buonpane: Phone: 1-800 425-3222 extension 7882 or gbuonpane@qualcareinc.com

Jordan Reses Rx Cards:

Connie Rogers, NJSBAIG: Phone: 609-386-6060 extension 3015 or crogers@njsbaig.org

Nancy Spector, NJSBAIG: Phone: 609-386-6060 extension 3008 or nspector@njsbaig.org

If at anytime you cannot reach Qualcare, please contact Connie Rogers or Nancy Spector at the numbers listed above. We will ensure you receive all the supplies you need. ☺

*By Connie Rogers
NJSBAIG Claims Supervisor*

Safe Disposal of Household Hazardous Waste

Paints, cleaners and other household products are a part of our daily lives. We rely on them to help us care for our homes, cars, yards, and gardens. Most household products are not harmful if used according to their labels and for their intended purpose. However, many do contain potentially hazardous ingredients. If unused portions of these products are improperly disposed, the waste could endanger human health and the environment.

What is household hazardous waste?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines “household hazardous waste” as leftover household product containing corrosive, toxic, ignitable or reactive ingredients. The EPA estimates as much as 100 pounds of household hazardous waste is accumulated in the average home each year.

Some examples of household hazardous waste include:

Corrosive Waste: Can cause a chemical reaction that eats away at materials or living tissue.

Examples: battery acid, drain cleaners, chlorine bleach, and oven and toilet bowl cleaners.

Toxic Waste: Can cause illness or death. Exposure may cause symptoms similar to poisoning.

Examples: antifreeze, pesticides, paints, photographic supplies, cleaning products, and many art supplies.

Ignitable Waste: Can catch fire spontaneously or burn easily. Examples: charcoal lighter fluid, gasoline, kerosene and nail polish remover.

Reactive Waste: Can react with air, water, or other substances to cause rapid heating or explosions. Examples: acids that heat up rapidly and spatter when mixed with water, and chlorine bleach mixed with ammonia, which forms a toxic gas.

Improper disposal of household hazardous waste may include placing product in the trash and emptying contents down the drain, on the ground, or in the storm sewers.

What can be done?

Although we can't eliminate the use of hazardous products, we can manage the waste. Take the time to learn proper disposal methods in your community. For details, call your local environmental health or solid waste agency. By following disposal instructions, you provide municipalities with the opportunity to remove products from the solid waste stream by obtaining them for reuse or recycling and to reduce the potential for accidental exposures to sanitation workers, materials recovery facility workers, landfill workers, and the environment. ♻️

National Safety Council

Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls

It can happen when walking on something you shouldn't be walking on. It can happen when you walk in the parking lot and aren't watching where you walk. It happens when you carry something and trip. It happens when you slip off a ladder. That's right, slips and falls. How does it happen and how can you prevent it?

The vast majority of slips and falls occur because the person is not paying attention to where they are walking or what they're doing. They either trip on something or the floor surface is slippery. We can describe slips and falls as a dual cause accident. We say dual because there may be two causes. First, the person wasn't paying attention.

