



ANDERSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

LAWN CARE SAFETY AND PPE

WHITE PAPER

Landscape and horticultural services encompass a wide range of services. Included in this category are companies engaged in landscape design and architecture; soil preparation and grading; irrigation systems; tree, shrub and lawn planting; hardscape construction including: retaining walls, pathways and patios; lawn care and landscape maintenance; arborist services including tree trimming and line clearance.

Mowing:

Walk-Behind Mowers:

Walk-behind mowers include both self-propelled and push-type mowers. These types of mowers are commonly used by young children, since they are generally light in weight and easy to manipulate in most lawn conditions. Several safety features exist which help protect against accidental injury. For example, all new mowers have directional flaps or shielded discharge outlets that direct grass and any other projection from hitting the operator. Also, since 1978, walk-behind lawn mowers have been equipped with a clutch handle or switch that stops the blade within three seconds after the operator lets go. Walk-behind mowers can be extremely dangerous to operators and bystanders when safety guards are removed, safety shut-down devices are disabled, and when mowers are operated in unsafe manner or environment. Practice the following safety tips to prevent injury:

- Do a walk-through of the yard prior to mowing. Remove any debris and obstructions including toys, limbs, rocks, wire, or glass. Locate all sprinkler heads, exposed electrical wire or cords, tree stumps, or exposed roots and pipe.
- Keep hands and feet away from the blade area while the mower is running.
- Never reach underneath or into the discharge chute to clear away grass or other obstructions when the blades are turning.
- Never bypass the engine kill handle or remove shields when mowing.
- Mow back and forth along the side of a steep hill, never up and down the slope.
- Don't direct the discharge chute in the direction of bystanders.
- Wear boots or shoes with good traction to avoid slipping and falling.
- Be careful when refueling a hot engine. Use a funnel to avoid spilling fuel. Clean up any fuel spills immediately.
- Wear proper protection against flying debris and noise (long pants, hard shoes, safety glasses, ear plugs, etc.)
- Allow the engine to cool before storing it in a storage shed.

- Don't mow a wet lawn. Losing control from slipping on rain-soaked grass is the leading cause of foot injury caused by power mowers.

Riding Mowers:

Riding mowers save homeowners valuable time and energy. These small tractors are much more powerful than walk-behind mowers and move two to three times as fast. Drivers should treat riding mowers as they would larger tractors, using safe driving techniques and safety devices to avoid accidents.

New riding mowers come equipped with seat safety switches that stop the cutting blades from turning whenever the driver leaves the seat. Some riding mowers also have safety interlocks that will not allow the mower to be started unless all controls are in proper position and the driver is in the seat. In addition to the safety tips listed for walk-behind mowers, riding mower operators should take additional precautions:

- Test drive the mower, and become familiar with it before engaging the mower blade.
- Put the riding mower into neutral before starting it or shutting it off.
- Don't drive too close to a creek or ditch, and be mindful of any obstructions.
- Make sure the transmission is out of gear and the mower blade clutch is disengaged before starting the engine.
- Mow up and down sloping terrain. Do not mow across a slope.
- Keep the mower in gear when going down slopes. Slow down when turning and when working on slopes.
- Disengage mower blade when on pavement, sidewalks or gravel lanes.
- Wear proper protection against flying debris and noise (long pants, hard shoes, safety glasses, ear plugs, etc.)

Power Tools:

In addition to mowers, an assortment of power tools is available that helps us manicure and shape our landscapes. Electric and gas-powered weed trimmers, lawn edgers, hedge trimmers, and leaf blowers do the work that used to take days and many backaches to accomplish.

However, this equipment is potentially dangerous and should be used with caution by those trained on how to use them safely.

- Watch out for exposed electrical wires, communication lines, and extension cords that could be damaged by the trimmer string.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing and equipment such as long-pants, long-sleeve shirts, gloves, hard boots, goggles or safety glasses, and ear plugs.
- Don't start an edger if the blade is touching the ground. It could move unpredictably and possibly contact your feet and legs.
- Wear appropriate eye protection such as goggles or safety glasses to guard against flying objects when operating a lawn edger.
- Be aware of pedestrians and others in the area.

- Chainsaw protective clothing should always be worn when using a chainsaw. Chainsaw chaps, pants and jackets can protect you by stopping the chain or preventing the chain from cutting yourself, giving you enough time to move away from the saw.

Lawn and Garden Chemicals:

Many landscape maintenance companies rely on periodic applications of natural and synthetic insecticide herbicides and fungicides to treat for a variety of insects, invasive weeds, and plant diseases. If you are thinking of using a lawn and garden chemical, read the label carefully to determine the product's toxicity to humans, animals, and the environment. The product label will give the recommended application rate and instructions, and will advise of any protective clothing or equipment required to apply the product. Heed the label directions, and use only the amount of chemical specified.

- Avoid exposure to skin, eyes and nose during and after application. Wear proper PPE (gloves, goggles, etc.)
- Avoid over-irrigating exposed area; pesticides may be washed away or become concentrated in standing water puddles.
- Use only the recommended amount; more chemical than prescribed will not do a better job
- After application, store extra chemicals in a secure location.

<http://agsafety.tamu.edu/files/2011/06/LAWN-MAINTENANCE-SAFETY3.pdf>

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/3269-10N-05-english-06-27-2007.html>

<https://www.osha.gov/landscaping>