

## LAWN MOWER SAFETY

The power lawn mower is one of the most dangerous tools around the home. Each year, tens of thousands of persons with injuries caused by power mowers are treated in hospital emergency departments. Many of those are under 18 years of age, including both users and bystanders.

Serious lawn mower injuries include deep cuts, loss of fingers and toes, broken and dislocated bones, burns, and eye and other injuries. Both users of mowers and those who are nearby can be hurt.

To prevent lawn mower injuries to children, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following:

- Make sure that children are indoors or at a safe distance well away from the area that is being mowed.
- Children younger than 16 years of age should not be allowed to use ride-on mowers.
- Children younger than 12 years of age should not use walk-behind mowers.
- Make sure that sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) are worn while mowing.
- Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Use a collection bag for grass clippings or a plate that covers the opening where cut grass is released. Have anyone who uses a mower wear hearing and eye protection.
- Try to use a mower with a control that stops the mower from moving forward if the handle is let go.
- Start and refuel mowers outdoors, not in a garage or shed. Mowers should be refueled with the motor turned off and cool.
- Make sure that blade settings are done by an adult, with the mower off and the spark plug removed or disconnected.
- 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.
- Always 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.
- Do not allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers.