

# Think safety this summer

## Be safe with power lawn equipment

NEWARK, Del. — The old-fashioned push mower had one big advantage over today's power lawn mower - it was a lot safer.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that last year about 65,000 people received hospital emergency room treatment for injuries associated with power lawn mowers and garden tractors. Another 10,000 were injured by powered hedge trimmers.

Ron Jester, Delaware extension safety specialist, says studies show that serious lawn mower accidents may result when objects are picked up and thrown by lawn mowers; when riding mowers tip over on steep slopes; when mowers operating in reverse run into someone; and when a person clears grass from the discharge chute or adjusts the machine before the blades have fully stopped.

Many other accidents are caused by the improper use of flammable liquids. To avoid accidents, Jester recommends studying the owner's manual and following the safety rules outlined below:

—Buy a power mower with a rear guard to protect hands and feet from blades, and a downward-aimed discharge chute.

—Before mowing, rake up wires, cans, rocks, twigs, and other litter.

—Don't mow a wet lawn. Footing is unsafe, and grass often clogs the discharge chute, tempting you to clear it with the machine running.

—Always turn off the mower and disconnect the spark plug wire or electric plug before unclogging or adjusting the machine. Even a slight rotation of the blade could start the engine.

—Never refuel a mower while it is running or the engine is hot.

—Mow across slopes with a walking mower. Drive a riding mower up and down slopes for stability.

—Be careful not to run over the cord of an electric mower.

—Push, don't pull, a hand

mower.

—Don't smoke near a power mower or near gasoline.

—Keep people and pets out of the mowing area.

—Stop the engine, even when you leave the mower for only a moment.

Jester says accidents with garden tractors are typically caused by overturning on uneven terrain, steep slopes or embankments; by running over victims, especially when the operators puts the garden tractor in reverse; and by ignition of flammable liquids.

Other accidents involve falls from tractors which are going too fast, or when shifting gears. The following suggestions will help assure a safe season with your garden tractor:

—Never allow children to operate the tractor, and keep them away from the area when you are operating it.

—Drive up and down slopes rather than across for greater stability.

—Don't try to tow other vehicles or pull them out of ditches or mud.

—Never refuel a garden tractor indoors. A spark or pilot light can ignite vapors.

—Start the garden tractor outdoors. Carbon monoxide gas can collect in a garage.

—Keep children away from the machine and the gasoline.

Don't take chances with power equipment, warn Jester. Using common sense will prevent most accidents.

How would you save a person who stopped breathing?

Centuries ago the victim would have been beaten with stinging nettles to bring him around. In the 1500's a fireside bellows was used to pump air into a victim's lungs. North American Indians tried to revive apparently dead persons by blowing smoke into an animal bladder attached to the victim's rectum. In the early 1800's drowning victims were bounced along on the back of a horse.

No one uses those techniques today. But some people still cling to the old back-pressure-arm-lift method, even though scientific tests have shown that mouth-to-mouth resuscitation delivers more oxygen to the blood and enables the first-aider to do a better job of monitoring the victim's response.

Are your first aid skills up-to-date? If you haven't had training recently, you may be surprised to discover that much of you know-how is obsolete. To find out if you need a refresher course, consider what you would do in the following situations. (Answers follow).

1. One night you and a friend come upon a car which has run off the road and hit a tree. The front

end is completely smashed and the driver is unconscious. He's bleeding heavily but his breathing is okay. There are no other passengers. What should you do?

A. Leave the victim in the car. Give him first aid. Send your friend to call an ambulance.

B. Gently move the victim to a level spot on the ground outside the car where you can monitor his vital signs and give him first aid. Send your friend to call an ambulance.

C. Put on a pressure bandage to stop the bleeding. Then improvise a stretcher from a blanket and carry the victim to a nearby home. Give him additional aid and call an ambulance.

D. Put on a pressure bandage to stop the bleeding. Then move the victim gently to your car and take him to a hospital.

E. None of the above.

2. You're taking a pan of bacon off the stove when you accidentally pour hot grease on your hand. The pain is tremendous. What should you do?

A. Quickly rinse off the grease in cold water, apply a burn ointment and rush to the hospital.

B. Stick your hand in cold water.

Have someone make up an ice-bag and keep your hand against that on the way to the hospital.

C. Put your hand under cold water for several minutes. Blot it dry, apply burn ointment, bandage it and go to the hospital.

D. Bandage the burn and rush to the hospital.

E. None of the above.

3. The grandparents come to visit. Grandmother has trouble with insomnia and takes sleeping pills at night. Because she doesn't like the childproof cap, she leaves the bottle open on the night stand. In the morning your three-year-old finds the bottle and swallows half the contents. You catch her in the act. What is the best way to make her vomit the medicine?

A. Give her a glass of concentrated salt water.

B. Give her a glass of mustard and water.

C. Stick the blunt end of a spoon into her throat.

D. Give her a tablespoon of syrup of ipecac.


E. None of the above.

4. Your family goes ice skating on a cold day in January. One of the kids is wearing very tight

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