



SHIFT BRIEFING



LAWNMOWERS- DANGERS OF THE BLADES

Lawnmowers can create terrible, painful, and disfiguring injuries.

The whirling metal piece below the mower deck is an inexpensive and effective method of shearing a variety of vegetation. However, approximately 70 percent of all lawn mower accidents are caused by blade contact. A person can come in contact with the blade by slipping under the mower deck or reaching into the discharge chute.

Lawn mower blades typically turn at 3,000 to 3,600 revolutions per minute the equivalent of 50 to 60 revolutions per second. Since the blade has two cutting edges, an object in line with the blade for only one second can be struck as many as 120 times.

The intensity of the damage from a blade rotating under these conditions is roughly equivalent to a 1.2-pound missile traveling at 232 miles per hour. Bones coming in contact with the mower blade are typically crushed and the wound is filled with dirt and grass, making it difficult for a surgeon to repair.

The typical clearance between the tip of the blade and the inside of the lawnmower case is less than one inch. You do not have to extend a body part very far into an opening to come into contact with the blade.

With the blade tip moving an average of 20,000 feet per minute it will strike many times before you can remove your hand or fingers. Tragically, there are often not enough recoverable parts to re-attach, so the result is a permanent amputation. Mower blades are dirty and can deposit debris and infectious agents in the wound making a high likelihood of infection.

It is human nature to have a momentary lapse of judgment. We simply must find a way to shield these exposures; such that it buys us a few seconds to have our brains engage and recognize the hazard.

Never remove a guard on an operating mower! The guard is there to protect the operator from exposure to the blade and will protect you from injury. Always follow these three rules to prevent coming into contact with mower blades:

- Never remove guards without using proper lock-out tag-out procedures.
- Never attempt to remove an obstruction from the blades while the lawnmower is running.
- Never bypass safety switches and other safety mechanisms.

“A lawnmower does not know the difference between a blade of grass and a finger or a toe. So it is up to the user to stay away from moving parts.”

“A moment of carelessness could lead to a lifetime of regret!”

Review one or two of these OSHA accidents involving lawn mower blades.