

by

Robert A. Schultheis, Natural Resource Engineering Specialist
University of Missouri Extension Center, Marshfield, MO

1. Select the right mower for the job. Make sure you have the size, strength and experience to run it. Ask for training if you are unsure how to operate the mower safely.
2. Know the equipment.
 - a. Read the owner's manual.
 - b. Follow safety decal instructions.
3. Prepare properly.
 - a. Make sure all mower guards and controls are working.
 - b. Pick up toys and trash in the area to be mowed. The mower can throw objects at 200 miles per hour (290 feet per second).
 - c. Keep bystanders well away.
 - d. Dress for safety.
 - * Heavy shoes, not tennis shoes, sandals, flip-flops or bare feet.
 - * Long pants, not shorts, for leg protection.
 - * Safety glasses or goggles for eyes.
 - * Ear plugs or acoustic muffs, not cotton, to control noise.
 - * Dust mask with N-95 rating for breathing protection.
 - * First-aid kit close by.
4. Use proper fueling method.
 - a. Remove spark plug wire from spark plug.
 - b. Cool hot mower 10 minutes or more before refueling.
 - c. Refuel outdoors or in well-vented area.
 - d. Use right fuel/oil mix, with fuel stabilizer, for type of engine.
 - e. Clean up any fuel spills right away.
5. Operate mower safely.
 - a. With *push mowers*, mow across slopes, never up and down.
 - b. With *riding mowers*, mow up and down slopes, never across.
 - c. Riding mowers have one seat. *Never allow extra riders!*
 - d. Look behind you before backing up with a riding mower.
 - e. Take extra care when turning.
 - f. Never pull a push mower backward.
 - g. Shut mower off before cleaning.