



Home and Garden Appliances

Home gardeners across the country are scrambling to get their lawns in tip-top shape. But if the past is any indication, a fair number of them will wind up in the emergency room for their troubles. In the U.S., approximately 87,000 people made hospital visits last year because of lawn mower mishaps; another 76,000 were treated for injuries associated with other lawn and garden equipment.

The safety professionals at Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. recommend the following precautions when working in your yard:

Lawn Mowers

- Read the owner's manual thoroughly. Learn the controls well enough to act instantly in an emergency and to stop the machine quickly.
- Store gasoline in a UL Listed safety container to keep fumes from escaping and causing potential fire situation. Fill the mower outside, away from possible ignition sources.
- Never operate the mower where carbon monoxide can collect, such as in a closed garage, storage shed or basement.
- Always rake before cutting grass to remove any large rocks, branches or other potential hazards.
- Never mow on wet grass, which could cause you to slip and lose control.
- If using an electric mower, reduce the risk of cutting the cord while you're mowing. Start mowing in the area nearest the electrical outlet, then mow away from the outlet so the power cord stay behind you.
- Never reach under the mower for any reason while the mower is in operation and make all adjustments with the motor off (i.e. with power cord or spark plug disconnected).
- Wear proper attire that does not hang or is loose fitting. Never work barefoot or in sandals, canvas shoes, etc. Make sure your shoes provide good traction to reduce slipping and have sturdy soles to resist punctures.
- Never leave a lawn mower "ON" while unattended. Curious children, eager to help, may get seriously injured.

Lawn and Garden Tools

- Always look for the UL Mark before purchasing a garden tool/appliance or any other electrical product. The UL Mark on a product means that representative samples of that product have been tested to stringent safety standards with regard to fire, electric shock and related hazards.
- Before using any appliance or tool, read and follow the manufacturer's use and care instructions. Pay attention to warning markings.
- Inspect tools for frayed power cords and cracked or broken casings. If the product is damaged, DO NOT use it or attempt to repair it yourself. Return the product or have a qualified repair shop examine it.
- Keep clothing, hands and feet away from cutting blades at all times. Never wear jewelry when working with tools. Always wear safety glasses.
- Never alter a product or remove safety features such as blade guards or electric plug grounding pins.
- Use only properly rated outdoor extension cords with outdoor electrical tools.
- Check the switch on a power tool or garden appliance to make sure it's "OFF" before you plug it in.
- Unplug and all portable electrically operated power tools when not in use. These tools contain electricity even when turned "OFF" but still plugged in. Store tools out of children's reach.
- Use and store power tools and garden appliances away from water sources to avoid electric shock. Never use tools in the rain.
- Have a qualified technician install ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) receptacles in all outdoor outlets. After installation, test your GFCIs monthly.

Follow these precautions and the manufacturer's instructions to enjoy longer, safer use of your spring cleaning and lawn maintenance equipment.