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Protect your family: Five killer outdoor power equipment-related dangers

RepairClinic.com shares tips to keep people and pets safe from summer lawn care dangers

By Shelton Herald on July 7, 2013 in [Features](#), [Lead News](#) · 0 Comments

About author



Shelton Herald

Summer lawn care can be dangerous, and [RepairClinic.com](#) has released a list of outdoor power equipment dangers and tips about how families can protect themselves.

The Michigan-based [RepairClinic.com](#) is an online store for replacement parts for outdoor power equipment, home appliances, and heating and cooling equipment.

1. Flying debris

"Lawn mowers and handheld outdoor power equipment can propel debris — such as pet and children's toys, stones, plastic edging, wood chips, pieces of aged blades, etc. — at speeds of up to 100 miles per hour," said Jeff Linderman of [RepairClinic.com](#).

"Being hit with these objects at such a speed can be fatal to children and pets," he said.

How to prevent injury caused by flying debris:

Walk the area before beginning a lawn care routine — Relocate toys, hoses, rocks and sticks to prevent costly and dangerous damage to your equipment.

Check the lawn mower blade regularly — Look for damage, bends and dullness. Blades should be replaced every year or two, depending on usage. Replacement blades are inexpensive and easy to install.

Make sure the mower's trail shield is working properly — A mower's trail shield, located at the back of the mower, prevents debris from flying out toward the operator. Before each mowing season, check to make sure this is working properly and free of tears.

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Don't adjust the mower's deflector — "Despite warnings against this in owner's manuals, people often remove or adjust the position of their mower's deflector," said Linderman. "This results in debris flying a longer distance."

Keep children and pets far away — "Always keep children and pets inside when the lawn mower or any outdoor power device is in operation," Linderman said. "Be mindful that neighborhood children and pets may also venture near you."

Dress appropriately — When operating the equipment, wear closed-toe slip-resistant shoes, safety goggles, gloves, a hat to reduce sun glare, ear plugs, and cover your skin as much as possible.

Never underestimate the power of handheld equipment — String trimmers, edgers, leaf blowers and other handheld power tools are powerful enough to propel rocks and other debris at speeds that could kill. Follow the same safety precautions as advised for your mowers.

2. Blind spots

Even the most alert outdoor power equipment operators may have difficulty with blind spots. When using a riding mower, it's particularly difficult to spot animals and children who may venture too close to the mower.

"When you're concentrating on grooming your yard well, it's easy to be unaware of what's happening around you," Linderman said.

How to avoid injuries from blind spot accidents:

Slow down and take care when mowing around corners, trees, shrubbery or other obstacles. Avoid mowing in reverse whenever possible.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that each year, 20,000 Americans are injured on or near riding lawn mowers. Most youth fatalities related to outdoor power equipment occur when a child is in the path of a moving mower.

"If it's necessary to back up, then slow down and thoroughly check the immediate vicinity before moving further," Linderman said. "Children and pets move fast. Don't assume that they'll remain in the same places you last saw them."

3. Carbon monoxide poisoning

Gasoline-powered engines produce carbon monoxide (CO) in concentrations high enough to cause illness or even death to people and pets if the equipment is operated in a poorly-ventilated area.

"Never operate equipment inside, even for a short time," Linderman said.

4. Power off doesn't mean no danger

Before repairing or adjusting equipment, study the owner's manual for model-specific instructions. After turning off the equipment, wait until the equipment

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has cooled entirely before attempting to do any work or maintenance.

“Remember this when you’re doing regular maintenance,” Linderman said. “Check the oil level and re-fuel the engine only when the engine is completely cool. Gasoline spills on a hot engine could result in an instant fire.”

5. Using them as toys

Lawn mowers and outdoor power equipment are powerful tools. Though many people enjoy the experience of operating them, they should not be used for entertainment purposes.

“Children and teenagers are attracted to outdoor power equipment,” Linderman said. “Never allow a child to operate these tools. Though sitting on a riding mower may appear to be harmless fun, remember that such situations have ended tragically many times.”

About RepairClinic.com

RepairClinic.com stocks more than one million parts and accessories for 160 brands of lawn mowers, small engines, string trimmers and other handheld outdoor power equipment, furnaces, air conditioners, air washing machines, dryers, dishwashers, vacuum cleaners and other products.

Founded in 1999, the website offers a free troubleshooting and repair help system for do-it-yourselfers, including more than 1,200 how-to videos.

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