



RISK CONTROL MEMORANDUM

To:	Catholic Diocese of Green Bay Parishes, Schools & Other Facilities
Attn:	Maintenance Persons, Custodians, or Buildings and Grounds Committees
Date:	June 15, 2011
From:	Gwendolyn Arps – Risk Control Consultant Direct Line: 920-431-6265 e-mail: gwendolyn.arps@aon.com
Re:	Lawn Care Safety

With the beautiful weather we have been enjoying this year, we have to start looking at safety issues that can occur this spring and summer. Each year, approximately 68,000 persons with injuries caused by power mowers are treated in emergency departments. Lawn mower injuries include deep cuts, loss of fingers and toes, broken and dislocated bones, burns, and eye and other injuries.

We understand that parishes and schools take great pride when it comes to making their grounds look their best in the summer months. Many of the personnel that take care of your parish grounds and facilities are volunteers, and many of them may be minors. With this in mind, we ask you to follow these guidelines.

Lawn Mower Guidelines:

- Persons under the age of 18 should not be allowed to operate tractors or riding lawn mowers.
- No person, other than the operator, should ride on tractors or lawn mowers.
- With proper training, individuals over the age of 16 could be allowed to operate a push mower, gasoline fueled blowers, and trimmers.
- All fuel should be stored in properly labeled and approved containers.
 - Type II safety cans are recommended.
 - Quantity of fuel should be limited to 5 gallons or less.
- Mowers should be refueled with the motor turned off and cool.
- Use a mower with a control that stops the mower from moving forward if the handle is let go.
- Safety glasses and hearing protection MUST be worn at all times.
- Long pants and sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) should be worn at all times.
- Manufacturer's maintenance and safety guidelines for all equipment should be followed.
 - Frequent inspection of equipment is essential to safe operation.
- Persons under the age of 16 should be given tasks appropriate to their age and skill level.
 - Tasks such as raking or bagging would be acceptable.
 - Heavy lifting should not be allowed.
- **Make sure other people, especially children, are out of the area.** Young children should be supervised in the facility while the grounds are being mowed. They cannot understand the dangers, and the operator may not hear or see children approach.
- **Never point the discharge chute at anyone.** You never know when something will be thrown from the mower. Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Never run the mower over gravel.



RISK CONTROL MEMORANDUM

Electrical Tool Guidelines:

- Protect the outlets used for operating electric trimmers, mowers and other tools with ground fault circuit interrupters.
- Use an extension cord designed for outdoor use and rated for the power needs of your tool.
- Before use, inspect tools for frayed power cords and cracked or broken casings. If the product is damaged, have it repaired by a qualified technician, or replace it.
- Make sure the tool's power switch is set to "OFF" before plugging in.

Chemical Product Guidelines:

- Apply agricultural chemicals when the wind is calm.
- Read the label of products and learn the safety precautions before use.
- Store chemicals in a locked cabinet or building.
- Keep all chemical products in their original labeled containers.

The Green Bay Catholic Diocese wishes to stress the importance of safety when it comes to lawn care. Following these simple guidelines can help prevent injury that could occur when taking care of the grounds at your facility.

*Content partially from Cordele Dispatch

This and other Risk Control Memorandums are also available on the Diocese website at:

<http://www.gbdioc.org/facilities-a-properties/risk-management-insurance/risk-control-information-education/risk-control-memos.html>