

Your Yard

7 Tips for Readyng Your Outdoor Power Equipment for Winter Storage

(NAPS)—After your lawn gets its last cut before winter, it will be time to put away spring and summer outdoor power equipment, such as lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and trimmers. It's also important to ready snow throwers, generators and other small-engine equipment for winter use. How and when you prepare your equipment for seasonal changes can save you time and money later, says the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI).

"Preparation is everything. Understanding how to operate and maintain your equipment safely is key," says Kris Kiser, President and CEO of OPEI. "Always follow your manufacturer's guidelines and remember to keep kids and dogs away from operating equipment. What you do now when you put away your equipment also sets you up for an easier spring start."

Helpful Hints

Here are seven tips from OPEI to ensure snow throwers will be ready when the flakes fly, and that your lawn mower and other spring equipment will be available for use when warmer temperatures return.

#1—Review owner's manuals. Re-familiarize yourself with how to handle equipment safely. Lost manuals can be found online. Save a copy on your computer if possible, so it can be consulted when needed. Be familiar with your equipment, and all its features, including how to turn it off quickly and safely.

#2—Service all equipment. Before storing spring and summer equipment, clean and service it or take it to a small-engine repair shop. Change engine oil and safely dispose the old oil. Service the air filter, and do other maintenance as directed by the owner's manual. Check winter equipment and see if any maintenance and repairs are required.

#3—Handle fuel properly. Unused fuel left in gas tanks over the winter can go stale and even damage equipment. Before storing equipment, add fuel stabilizer to the gas tank, then run the equipment to distribute it. Turn the engine off, allow the machine to cool, then restart and run until the gas tank is empty. For winter equipment, buy the recommended type of fuel no more than 30 days before use.



When you prep equipment for seasonal changes, you can save time and future headaches.

Use fuel with no more than 10% ethanol in outdoor power equipment. Use a fuel stabilizer if recommended by the manufacturer. Get more information on safe fueling for outdoor power equipment at LookBeforeYouPump.com.

#4—Charge the battery. Remove and fully charge batteries before storing. Don't store batteries on metal shelves or allow them to touch metal objects. Store them on a plastic or wood shelf in a climate-controlled structure.

#5—Shelter equipment from winter weather. Store spring and summer equipment in a clean and dry place such as a garage, barn or shed. Winter equipment should be kept away from the elements, but be easily available for use.

#6—Prepare, prepare, prepare. Make space in the garage or basement before the weather changes, so there is room to store larger yard items. Remove sticks, debris, dog and kid's toys and other items from your yard that can damage or destroy equipment. Clear the paths used regularly, especially during the winter when snow can "hide" things.

#7—Have the right weather-appropriate extension cord for your generator. Keep heavy duty outdoor-rated extension cords on hand. Ensure the cord is the right length to operate the generator a safe distance from the building. Never operate a generator indoors, in a garage, breezeway or under an open window or near any air intake for a building.

Learn More

For further facts and tips, visit www.OPEI.org.