

# SAFETY SENSE

## Sharpening Up Your Mower Safety

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(NAPSA)—As we really get moving into the mowing season, you may want a quick refresher on mower safety. Mower blades move at astonishing speeds—about 200 miles an hour. Now that's a speed that you don't want to play around with. So, before you start your mower, make sure you are up to date with these safety guidelines:

- Always read your operator's manual and pay close attention to the warning labels on your mower.

- Be sure to dress properly—wear eye protection and long pants, and avoid loose-fitting clothing that can get caught in controls. Wear sneakers for protection against whirling blades—even in hot weather when it might be more comfortable to wear sandals. Be extra careful walking backward with a walk-behind mower. Don't pull back too far and run over your own toes.

- Be careful when mowing a steep slope of grass. The first thing to do is take a look at your mowing equipment. One of the most important things to remember with a riding mower is to mow up and down slopes. But when using a walk-behind, you should mow across slopes for the greatest stability. That way, if you trip and fall, the mower is less likely to tumble on top of you. If the hillside is really ominous, get creative and plant a ground cover instead. On flatter areas, watch your speed. Use the higher speeds only for transport to the mowing area. While you're mowing in a wide-open area, stay in control by using



**Before cutting the grass, it's a good idea to sharpen your knowledge of mower safety.**

the medium speeds. Switch to low speeds as you're turning corners and trimming borders.

- Never allow young children to ride on mowers with the operator or operate walk-behind mowers. John Deere recommends keeping small children in the house under the supervision of an adult. Kids move quickly, without thinking about consequences. So it's important to alert them that mowers are tools, and reinforce the lesson by keeping them out of the area. Don't give children rides on mowers, as they may interpret this as mowers are fun. Even a ride in a tow-behind cart can confuse them. You never know when a child will come running up from behind, expecting another ride, and you may not see him or her. So, no passengers.

Remembering these guidelines can help keep you safe while mowing your lawn. Enjoy the weather and stay safe.