

SAFETY SENSE



Tips On Lawn Mower Safety

(NAPSA)—Many parents know it's important to tend to more than their yards when they do yard work. Still, thousands of children are injured in yard-work-related injuries every year.

It only takes a moment for a child to dart into the path of a lawn mower. Myranda got her foot trapped underneath the blade of her father's riding lawn mower when she was 2 years old. Spence lost part of his foot when he tripped in front of a riding lawn mower when he was 3. Both Myranda and Spence had to have a foot amputated and now use prostheses.

Myranda and Spence are among the many children Shriners Hospitals for Children treats each year who have lost fingers, toes and limbs as a result of power lawn mower accidents.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than 84,000 injuries result from lawn mower accidents each year, and 8,800 of those injuries are to children under the age of 18. One out of every five lawn mower deaths involves a child.

According to a report published in the Annals of Emergency Medi-

cine Web site, children between the ages of 15 and 19 have the highest rate of hospitalizations caused by lawn mower accidents, and the second-most-common result of these hospitalizations is toe amputation.

To prevent lawn mower injuries, follow these safety tips from Shriners Hospitals for Children and the CPSC:

- Do not allow passengers on a riding mower.
- Keep children out of the yard and indoors while mowing the lawn.
- Do not allow children under the age of 14 to operate a lawn mower.
- Always prepare your lawn for mowing. Check your lawn for items such as sticks, rocks, toys, etc. Make sure nothing is hidden in the grass.
- Handle fuel with care. Wipe up spills. Never fill the tank on a mower that is hot. Never smoke or use any kind of flame around gasoline.
- Wear appropriate clothing and shoes, including long pants, long-sleeved shirts, eye protection, heavy gloves, and sturdy, close-toed shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles.

- Check guards and shields. Read the owner's manual and know how to operate the equipment. Don't remove or disable guards or other safety devices.

- Always use a mower with an automatic blade cutoff. Stay behind the handle until the blade stops.

- Never reach under a mower while it is still operating. If you need to remove debris or check the blade, disconnect the wire from the spark plug.

- Don't cut grass when it's wet.
- On slopes, mow up and down rather than across the slope.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services to children with orthopaedic problems, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate at no charge, write to Shriners International Headquarters, 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607 or visit www.shrinershq.org. All services are provided at no charge to children under 18, regardless of financial need or relation to a Shriner.

If you know a child whom Shriners can help, call (800) 237-5055 in the United States or (800) 361-7256 in Canada.