



Tractor & Mower Safety

A Risk Pool Member employee (who had been employed for less than a year) was alone and mowing wet grass on an incline above a creek. Sadly, she drowned in just a few inches of water after being pinned by the mower as it slid down the hill. This incident clearly shows that riding mowers and tractors can be dangerous. Of course, teaching employees how to safely operate mowers can easily prevent most accidents. The tips listed below can keep your employees safe when mowing.



Training:

Every employee should be trained prior to operating a tractor or mower of any kind. Training should include the operation, maintenance, limitations, guards, and warnings related to the equipment being used. Employees should read and be familiar with the owner/operator manual for equipment being used, as operations and characteristics may vary.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Operators should always use the required PPE, including hearing protection, safety glasses, and suitable footwear. They should avoid wearing jewelry and loose clothing and should protect hair from becoming entangled in the machinery.



Site Assessment:

Operators should always survey the terrain for hazards prior to mowing. This will help identify obstacles such as large rocks, tree stumps, soft or wet spots, and other hazards. Roadways can pose particular challenges – operators should know their work zone, traffic safety rules, and wear appropriate PPE, including reflective vests.



Slopes & Roll Over Protection Structure (ROPS):

Operators should always evaluate the slope and terrain to ensure safety, and mowers generally shouldn't be used on slopes of more than 15 degrees. Areas that present roll-over risk include wet surfaces, slopes, areas near drop-offs, retaining walls, unprotected ditches, excavations, and bodies of water. ROPS-equipped mowers should also be equipped with seatbelts, which should always be worn.

Additional Resources

- Texas Department of Insurance [Riding Lawnmower Safety Fact Sheet](#)
- [American National Standard for Commercial Turf Care Equipment - Safety Specifications](#). American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Available for purchase at www.ansi.org
- OSHA - [Dangers of Roll-Overs of Riding Mowers](#)
- [TMLIRP Media Library](#)
 - Right-of-Way Mowing Safety (DVD) Disk #679
 - Safety Procedures for Lawn Mower Operations (DVD) Disk #113
- TMLIRP Safer in Seconds Series: [Preventative Maintenance – Zero Turn Mowers](#)