



St. George FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Lawn and Garden Safety Tips - Take Care with Springtime Chores

One of the nice things about living in the St. George Fire Protection District is that we are surrounded by businesses and residents who take pride in the appearance of their lawns and gardens. Springtime is upon us, and everything is sprouting new growth. As our thoughts are turned to yard work, let's remember a few basic safety facts.

Each year, about 25,300 people are injured and 75 people are killed on or near riding lawnmowers and garden tractors. One out of every five deaths involves a child. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that most of the deaths of children occurred when a child was in the path of a moving mower.

Other garden equipment can be dangerous even when it is not in use. For example, weed and hedge-trimming equipment has sharp blades that can cut if the blades are mishandled.

The St. George Fire Department along with the CPSC recommends that citizens take the following precautions to prevent injuries from lawn and garden equipment:

- Dress appropriately for the task. Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, close-fitting clothes and no jewelry (to avoid getting anything caught in moving parts), sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles, eye protection, heavy gloves (protects hands when changing, sharpening, or cleaning blades), and hearing protection such as ear plugs when using motor-driven equipment.
- Before starting up machinery, remove objects such as sticks, glass, metal, wire, and stones from the area in which you are working. They can cause injury or damage equipment.
- Make sure that safety devices on the equipment are functioning properly before starting work.
- Never let a child ride or operate a garden tractor or riding mower, even if the child is supervised.
- Keep children indoors and supervised at all times when any outdoor power equipment is being used. Young children move quickly and are attracted to mowers and mowing activity. Also, never assume children will remain where you last saw them.
- Unplug electric tools and disconnect spark plug wires on gasoline-powered tools before making adjustments or clearing jams near moving parts.
- Be sure power tools are turned off and made inoperable if they must be left unattended.
- Handle gas carefully. Never fill gasoline tanks while machinery is on or when equipment is still hot. Wipe up spills. Store gas in an approved container away from the house. Finally, never smoke or use any type of flame around gasoline or any gasoline-powered equipment.
- Never work with electric power tools in wet or damp conditions. For protection against electrocution, use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). GFCIs come in several models, including a portable plug-in type.
- Be sure that extension cords are in good condition, are rated for outdoor use, and are the proper gauge wire for the electrical current capacity of the tool.

In addition to exercising caution when using lawn and garden equipment, we urge you to not over-exert yourself. The high humidity in south Louisiana combines with the temperature to heighten the danger of heat related stress. Remember to drink plenty of water or isotonic-type fluids.

Avoid alcoholic beverages. They can actually hasten de-hydration in addition to slowing reflexes, which heightens the hazards of operating power equipment.