

# NASA-LaRC SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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## SAFETY AROUND LAWMOWERS

Each weekend, an estimated 55 million Americans push or ride gasoline or electric powered lawnmowers. For most people, mowing the lawn is a seasonal chore; for a surprising number of others, however, lawn mowing results in serious injury.

The most serious injuries are amputated fingers and toes. The most dangerous mowers are riding mowers, which kill many people each year.

Safety of push mowers is improving, partly because of tougher federal standards. Injuries from these mowers have declined nearly 40 percent since 1982. It was then that a federal regulation required that all new mowers automatically shut off when the user steps away from the machine. In 1983, 41,900 people sought treatment in emergency rooms for mower related injuries, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. By 1989, that number had dropped to 25,800.

There has not, however, been a decrease in the number of injuries caused by riding mowers. In 1983, 18,400 people were hurt on riding mowers; in 1989, the number rose to 19,600. Most deaths from riding mowers occur in children who are accidentally run over by parents and grandparents.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission advises:

- \* Keep children indoors when the grass is being cut. Never give a child a ride on a mower.
- \* Wear heavy shoes or boots. Never cut the lawn barefooted. Spiked golf shoes are recommended for cutting on hills or wet grass.
- \* Wear eye protection.
- \* Do not drink alcohol before mowing.
- \* Do not mow grass at dusk.
- \* Pick up rocks and sticks on the lawn before mowing.

## PLAYGROUND AREA

Spring is here and summer just around the corner. With the coming of warmer weather, the playground area is used by more people. Many of the visitors are young children who frequently run from one area to another. Vehicle drivers are reminded that the speed limit behind the Activity Center ( North Wright Street ) is 10 miles per hour.

## FACILITY ACCESS DURING OFF DUTY HOURS

Employees are reminded that safe work procedures are important during off duty hours. Individuals are responsible for the unlocking and locking of facility doors for security. Administrative type activities may be performed individually, but other functions, research or support, shall not be performed without the "buddy system" and all usual safety precautions in place. Management should encourage Facility Safety Head concurrence in off duty facility access to assure adequacy of safety considerations.

In off duty hours the Duty Officer is the official contact point for the Center. The Duty Officer, who can be reached at extension 44927, provides support services and resolves problems arising after normal duty hours, weekends and holidays. The Duty Officer can be a vital link to individuals needing assistance in facilities after normal duty hours. It should also be noted that emergency ambulance is available around the clock by dialing extension 42222.

Let's all continue to work together to keep Langley Research Center a safe place to work.