

## Manual of Administration

<b>TOPIC:</b> Health and Safety	<b>SUBJECT:</b> Guidelines for the use of Lawnmowers and String Trimmers (Weed Eaters)	<b>Code:</b> HS060
		<b>Date of Issue:</b> January 2004
		<b>Revised:</b> September 2006
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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to inform employees of the guidelines for the safe use of lawnmowers and string trimmers (Weed Eaters), in order to support individuals to safely operate the above-listed equipment.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

#### **Lawnmowers:**

1. If using a gas-operated lawnmower, fill the fuel tank before starting the engine. Never refuel the mower when it is running or while the engine is hot. If running an electric-operated lawnmower, check that all cords are in good condition, with no cut or frayed wires.
2. Check the lawn for debris (twigs, rocks, and other objects) before mowing the lawn. Objects can be struck by the mower blade and thrown out from under the mower, resulting in severe injuries and deaths. Always ensure that debris leaving the mower does not face windows, vehicles, or persons, etc.
3. Don't cut the grass when it is wet. Wet clippings could clog the discharge chute, jam the rotary blade and shut down the engine. When clippings need to be removed from the chute, the mower must be off and the power source disconnected.
4. Wear sturdy shoes with sure-grip soles when using the mower, never sandals or with bare feet. Slacks rather than shorts offer better protection for the legs. Staff must wear the required safety goggles or glasses when operating a lawnmower. Safety glasses are provided by Avenue II. (For the location of safety glasses in NEIGHBOURS homes, refer to the posted Emergency Safety Equipment Log).
5. Push the mower forward, never pull it backward.
6. If the lawn slopes, mow across the slope with the walk-behind rotary mower, never up and down. With a riding mower, drive up and down the slope, not across it.
7. Don't remove any safety devices on the mower. Remember that the safety features were installed to help protect against injury. Check safety features often and repair or replace if needed.
8. With an electric mower, cut the area nearest the electrical outlet, and then gradually move away. This will minimize chances of you running over the power cord and

being electrocuted.

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9. Read the owner's manual to become familiar with the workings of the machine. Keep the manual in a safe place so it will be handy, if it is needed.
10. Check the manual for recommendations on performing routine maintenance, checking engine oil levels and fluid in powered wheel drives, and performing maintenance when the mower is stored during the off-season.

#### **Weed Trimmers:**

1. Staff must wear the required safety goggles or glasses when operating weed trimmers. Safety glasses are supplied by Avenue II. (For the location of safety glasses in NEIGHBOURS homes, refer to the posted Emergency Safety Equipment Log).
2. Keep all people a safe distance away from the operator during use.
3. Clear the work area of trash or hidden debris that could be thrown back at the operator or at a bystander.
4. When using an electric weed trimmer, check that all cords are in good condition, with no cut or frayed wires. If using a gas-powered trimmer, fill the fuel tank before starting the engine. Never refuel the trimmer while it is running or while the engine is hot.
5. Use the proper cutting attachment for the job. Use the flexible string trimmer or hand tools for cutting near buildings, fences, etc., where a rigid blade may cause damage and injury.
6. When using a blade trimmer, before starting, make sure the blade is properly secured to the shaft. Replace damaged blades. Avoid cutting close to fences, sides of buildings, or other such obstacles that could cause the weed trimmer to ricochet.
7. Wearing protective clothing (long slacks) is recommended, as well as the required safety goggles or glasses. (For the location of safety glasses in NEIGHBOURS homes, refer to the posted Emergency Safety Equipment Log).

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### **Storage of Gas-Powered Lawnmowers and String Trimmers:**

1. Gas-powered lawnmowers and weed trimmers must be stored in an outside shed during summer and winter.
2. Lawnmowers and weed trimmers should be emptied of gas for proper winter storage.
3. Lawnmowers should be stored with all four wheels on the floor. They should not be hung up for storage.