

# MONITORING MOWING

We have a fair idea of how many people in the green industry operate lawn mowers. But how many operate them carefully? Here's a mowing safety quiz that will help you and your people determine how safety-conscious you are.

## SAFETY FIRST QUIZ

1. When using a walk-behind mower on a hillside, is it better to mow across the hill or up and down?
2. What can you do to help prevent mower blades from throwing objects out of the discharge chute and causing damage?
3. Is it a good idea to mow as close to a tree trunk as possible so less trim work will have to be done?
4. What action should you take when moving a mower across a gravel driveway?
5. Where would you park a mower for refuelling?
6. What's the first action to take before clearing a clogged mower?
7. How does landscaping affect mowing safety?
8. Where can you get more information on mowing safety?





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## Here are the answers

1. It's recommended you mow across hillsides with a walk-behind mower so that you're less likely to fall on the tumbling mower if you slip and fall. However, riding mowers are more stable going up and down slopes. Steep hillsides can be planted in a groundcover that never needs mowing.
2. Before starting the mower, walk around the lawn to pick up debris—sticks, stones, dog bones, chain—anything that can be hurled by the mowing blades.
3. Avoid mowing close to trees. If you mow close to a tree trunk, you run several risks. First, you can scrape off bark and damage the tree. You can be scratched by lower branches. You can be thrown off-balance by lower branches. If possible, remove the

grass around trees in a circle with a one- to three-foot radius, depending on the height of the tree. Fill the circle with a soft mulch like shredded bark. This makes it possible to trim more conveniently with the mower and helps protect the tree.

4. Before mowing across gravel, turn off the mower blades so they don't send out a hail storm of tiny stones.

5. A driveway is a good place to refuel because any spilled fuel can be wiped up conveniently without harming the lawn. If possible, when refuelling, wait for the engine to cool.

6. Before clearing a clog, you, of course, should make sure the cutting blades are turned off and not under power. Disconnect the spark plug wire on walk-behind mowers. Turn off the mower engagement switch on a riding mower. Never put your fingers under the mower deck if there's any possibility that the blades can turn under power. The blades move very

close to the deck housing.

7. Landscaping touches can determine your mowing direction. Mowing forward provides better visibility and greater convenience. Mowing backward is a more awkward maneuver. If you have to go backward, look back before moving and keep looking all around. Move as short a distance as possible; try to move forward as soon as possible.

8. Mowing safety information is available from several sources. The operator's manual is one. Decals on the machine itself is another. Or, you can sometimes get safety information from the manufacturer itself from your dealer/distributor. Finally, a booklet titled "Safety Know—How" is available from John Deere & Co., Dept. 574, 1400 Third Avenue, Moline, IL 61265. The 12-page booklet for both landscape professionals and homeowners discusses the safe operation of mowers, tillers, snow blowers and chain saws.

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