



Safety Alert #3 – Lawn Mower Safety

Incident/Hazard	Lawn Mower Safety
Location	DOBCEL Schools
Alert	All schools

Potential concerns and risks

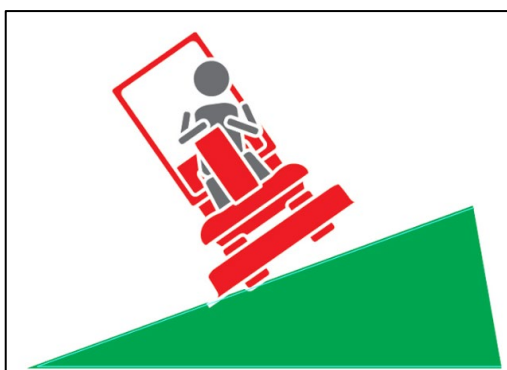
There are different risks when it comes to operating lawn mowers, from failing to service equipment regularly, to operating the machinery on certain surfaces and slopes, not wearing the right PPE for examples. This safety alert is a reminder to be vigilant and mindful when operating lawn mowers.

Ride on Lawn Mower risks

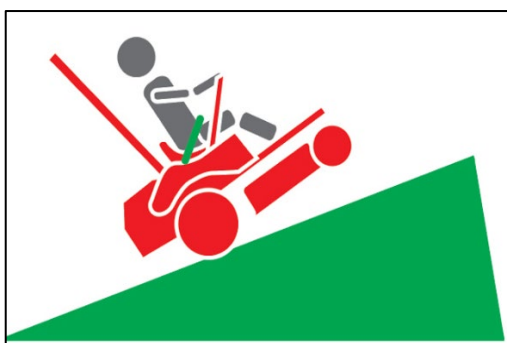
Traditional ride on lawn mowers, zero turn lawn mowers and front mowers have different risks when in operation; particularly when operated on steep slopes, uneven ground, in long grass and wet grass.



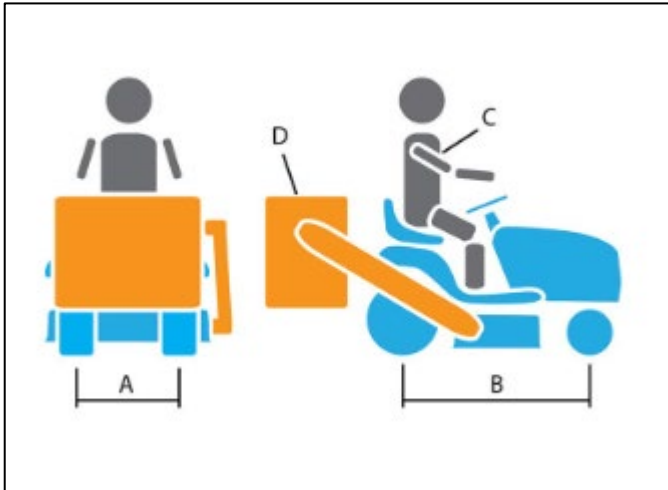
A **Traditional Ride on Mower** is at the highest risk of overturning on its side when operating across a steep slope; traditional ride on mowers are not fitted with a roll protective structure and should not be used on steep slopes.



A **Front Mower** is at the highest risk of overturning on its side when operating across a steep slope.



A **Zero Turn Mower** is at the highest risk of backflipping when operating up a steep slope; the two wheel configuration means it has less traction than a 4-wheel drive ride on mower.



The **stability** of a ride on mower is affected by a) track width, b) wheelbase, c) position of operator and d) accessories fitted e.g. sun canopy.

If a lawn mower is not fitted with a seat belt or rollover protection structure; seriously think about upgrading your equipment. As per the OHS regulations (section 109), an employer so far as is reasonably practicable must reduce risks relating to powered mobile plant overturning and the operator being ejected from powered mobile plant.

Recommendations and prevention actions

- Lawn mowers have a roll-over protection structure and seat belt fitted.
- Stay clear of uneven surfaces or slopes when operating ride on mowers, consider utilizing different equipment such as a brush cutter to tend to these spaces.
- Be very mindful of long grass and wet grass when operating ride on mowers.
- Be aware of overhead hazards such as low hanging tree branches.
- Don't use the lawn mower at speed and always be aware of people/pedestrians.
- Complete a risk assessment of your school grounds to help identify any specific areas of risks and hazards when operating lawn mowers.
- Consider the hierarchy of controls when eliminating or reducing the risk of operating lawn mowers.
- Ensure a regular service schedule is in place and keep the lawn mower in sound working condition.
- Ensure the use of appropriate PPE and wear safety footwear when operating lawn mowers.
- Do not wear items such as scarves or loose clothing that can get tangled in the lawn mower when operating the lawn mower.
- Complete the DOBCEL Lawn Mower Pre Start Checklist to assist with regular inspections.
- Ensure staff that utilize lawn mowers are trained and competent in their use.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/preventing-ride-lawn-mower-rollover>

Reference: Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 & WorkSafe Victoria 2025