

Training Module: Rotary Agricultural Mower Safety

Objective: To understand hazards associated with rotary mowers and methods for reducing those hazards.

Trainer's Note: A rotary mower is a useful piece of equipment to farmers and orchard growers however misuse can be deadly. Demonstrate the safe use of a rotary mower. Present the demonstration in the farm shop or in open field. Ask an employee who normally operates the rotary mower to assist with the session.

Background

Knowing the capabilities of the mower allows for the use of the right mower for the job. The operator's manual will help determine if the mower is designed for the job. Keep bystanders away from the mowing and never allow riders on the tractor.

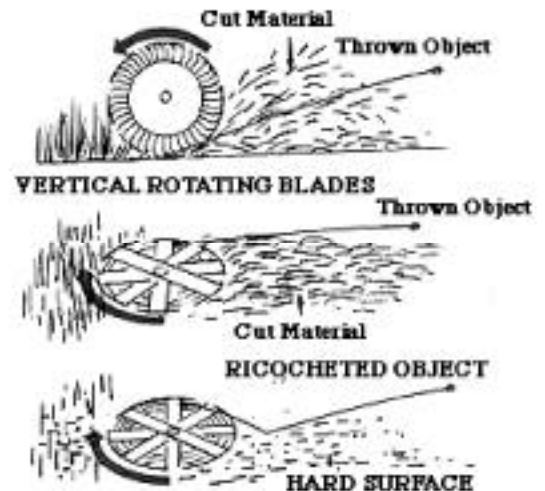
Remove all litter and debris from the area to be mowed. Stones, tin cans and wire can be deadly when thrown by a mower blade. Be alert for holes and ditches; these hazards may cause the driver to lose control of the mower. Wear a seat belt when the tractor is equipped with a roll over protective structure (ROPS).

Before dismounting from the tractor always disengage the power take off (PTO), turn off the engine and set the brakes. When approaching the mower, make sure that the blades are not rotating. Be aware that the blades will continue to rotate for awhile after the power has been shut-off.

Be cautious while making turns. If the rear tractor wheel of a pull type mower catches the mower frame, it could throw the operator. The three-point-hitch mounted mower can swing outward when turning. Adding front wheel weights for balance and control and a wide-setting for the rear tires enhances tractor stability and reduces the chance of a tractor overturn.

Hazard risks increase when equipment is not well maintained. Know the proper maintenance procedures. Check machinery for loose parts and blade sharpness. Replace blades that are too dull to sharpen. Rotary mowers are equipped with runners and safety guards. To avoid excessive wear on the runners, keep the mower just high enough to avoid riding on the runner shoes.

Keep all guards in place and well maintained. Use chain or belt guards to reduce the possibility of objects being thrown from under the mower. PTO's must be shielded.



A child working for a parent or guardian on a farm owned or operated by that person, is permitted to operate a tractor with over 20 PTO horsepower. These jobs can be started at age 14 and require special training. Know the child labor laws.

Safety tips:

- Keep all guards in place.
- Drive cautiously and know the area.
- Always read the owner's/operator's manual.
- Keep others away from the area being mowed.
- No riders.
- Know the child labor laws.
- Wear a seat belt when the tractor is equipped with ROPS.

Review The Following Points

- Know the capabilities of the mower.
- Check for debris, holes and obstacles prior to mowing.
- Add tractor weights and wider tires if needed.
- Know and follow maintenance procedures.
- Keep all guards in place at all times.
- Know the Law when hiring youth to drive tractor mowers.

True or False Answer Key

1. F, 2. F, 3. F, 4. T, 5. T

Rotary Agricultural Mower Safety Quiz

True or False

Name _____

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Riders can safely ride on a tractor. | T | F |
| 2. There is no need to check the area before mowing. | T | F |
| 3. If maintenance is required, guards do not need to be replaced. | T | F |
| 4. Always disengage the PTO before dismounting from the tractor. | T | F |
| 5. Knowing the capabilities of the mower is important. | T | F |