



**City of Montpelier, Vermont**  
*"The Smallest Capital City in the United States"*

# **GROUNDS KEEPING/MOWING PLAN AND PROCEDURES**

**Last Updated April 14, 2005**

# **GROUNDS KEEPING/MOWING PLAN AND PROCEDURES**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>GENERAL RULES.....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>LIFTING PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>LADDERS AND STEP LADDERS.....</b>	<b>Page 3-4</b>
<b>POWERED LAWN MAINTENANCE TOOLS.....</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>HEDGE AND TREE TRIMMING.....</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER SPRAYING.....</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>LEARNING EXERCISE.....</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>ANSWERS TO LEARNING EXERCISE .....</b>	<b>Page 9</b>

## **LAWN MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL**

### **General Rules**

1. When working outdoors during the day, it is recommended, when conditions warrant, wearing sun block, a long sleeve shirt, a hat and long pants.
2. Stop lawn maintenance operations during an electrical storm and when lightning is visible or thunder is heard.
3. Use work gloves when handling heavy or sharp objects outdoors, such as tree stumps and branches.
4. When working in right of way (ROW), use a safety vest.
5. Check equipment for loose bolts, belts, missing guards and any damage before use.
6. Always clean equipment after use. Remove accumulation of grass, leaves and excessive grease.
7. Always check for bystanders and take appropriate actions to shut down operations or move to another area free of bystanders.
8. For lawn mowing always disconnect spark plug before equipment service.

### **Lifting Procedures**

#### **Preparation**

1. Never lift anything if your hands are greasy or wet.
2. Wear protective gloves when lifting branches or clippings with thorns or jagged edges.
3. Plan the move before lifting; remove obstructions from your chosen pathway.
4. Test the weight of the load before lifting by pushing the load along its resting surface.
5. If the load is too heavy or bulky, use a wheelbarrow, hand truck, dolly or get assistance.
6. If assistance is required to perform a lift, coordinate and communicate your movements with those of your co-worker.
7. For lifting, position your feet 6 to 12 inches apart with one foot slightly in front of the other. Face the load. Bend at the knees, not at the back. Keep your back straight. Get a firm grip on the object with your hands and fingers. Use handles when present. Hold objects as close to your body as possible.
8. Slide materials to the end of the tailgate before attempting to lift them off of a pick-up truck.
9. Do not lift over the walls or tailgate of the truck bed.

#### **Lifting**

1. Perform lifting movements smoothly and gradually; do not jerk the load.
2. If you must change direction while lifting or carrying the load, pivot your feet and turn your entire body.
3. Do not twist at the waist. Set down objects in the same manner as you picked them up, except in reverse.

### **Ladders and Step Ladders (SEE ALSO FALL PROTECTION PROGRAM AND PROCEDURES)**

#### **Preparation**

1. Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions label affixed to the ladder if you are unsure how to use the ladder.
2. Do not use ladders that have loose rungs, cracked or split side rails, missing rubber foot pads, or other visible damage.
3. Remove buildup of material such as dirt or mud.
4. Allow only one person on the ladder at a time.
5. Do not stand on a ladder that wobbles, or that leans to the left or right.
6. Secure the ladder in place, for a short project you can have another employee hold it.

### **Climbing**

1. Face the ladder when climbing up or down.
2. Maintain a three-point contact by keeping both hands and one foot or both feet and one hand on the ladder at all times when climbing up or down.
3. When performing work from a ladder, face the ladder and do not lean backward or sideways from the ladder.
4. Do not stand on the top two rungs of any ladder.
5. Do not carry items in your hands while climbing up or down a ladder.
6. Do not try to "walk" a ladder by rocking it. Climb down the ladder, and then move it.

## **Powered Lawn Maintenance Tools**

### **Preparation**

1. Read and follow the manufacturer's routine and preventive maintenance schedule posted on the workshop wall.
2. Do not use tools with parts that are loose, worn beyond safe use, cracked or otherwise visibly damaged.
3. Tag damaged tools "Out of Service" to prevent accidental start up or use.
4. Do not alter or by-pass any safety device provided by the manufacturer.
5. Use only the grip locations, as specified by the manufacturer, as handholds when operating the unit.
6. Wear safety glasses, ear protection, a dust mask when necessary and closed toe shoes when operating any mower, edger, chain saw (additional requirements specified in chain saw safety policy), line trimmer, or any other powered lawn maintenance tool.
7. Do not use a chain saw, lawn mower, or any other gasoline powered lawn tool if you are taking medication from a container labeled "May cause drowsiness".

### **Running the equipment**

1. Do not pour fuel into the tank of a running engine, or while on a tailgate (static electricity hazard)
2. Do not smoke while servicing, using or refueling equipment.
3. Keep body parts and clothing away from the running engine and the cutting blade.
4. Do not idle engine inside an unventilated area.
5. Turn off the engine when you are not cutting or trimming.
6. Do not remove or alter mowing guards.

### **Afterwards**

1. Allow the engine to cool before performing maintenance or refueling.
2. Stop the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before cleaning, inspecting, adjusting or repairing cutting blades or other rotating parts.
3. Allow the engine to cool before covering or storing it in the storage shed.

## **Mowing**

1. Before entering area to be mowed, check for bystanders and animals.
2. Visually inspect the area to be mowed. Remove or mow around hazards such as tree stumps, roots, rocks, branches, sprinklers, hoses, electrical cords, light fixtures, pipes, trash, etc.
3. Never by-pass the kill switches on the mower handle.
4. Only the operator is permitted to ride on a riding mower.
5. Put the mower into neutral before starting or shutting off a riding power mower.
6. Do not place hands or feet under the mower deck.
7. Do not direct the grass discharge towards bystanders.
8. Empty the grass catcher to avoid clogging the mower.
9. Turn off the mower before dumping the grass catcher or removing clogged grass from the chute.
10. When using a riding mower, mow up and down the slope or do not operate on slopes beyond the manufacturer's recommended rating.
11. Keep the mower in gear when going down slopes.
12. Always push a mower in a forward direction and do not pull.
13. Always turn a mower off when crossing a sidewalk or roadway.

### **Edging**

1. Always use appropriate eye, ear and foot (closed toe shoes are required) protection.
2. Do not start an edger with the blade touching the ground.
3. Do not allow anyone to stand in front of or on the unguarded side of the blade while the edger is in operation.
4. Operate the edger at full blade speed.
5. When edging along roads, driveways or parking lots, stay as close to the curb as possible.

### **Line Trimming/Weed Eaters/Brush cutters**

1. Always use appropriate eye, ear and foot protection. (When a blade is used on a brush cutter, the required footwear is safety toe shoes.)
2. Do not operate near anyone who does not have appropriate protection
3. Before refueling, remove the trimmer from your harness, place the trimmer on the ground, allow engine to cool.

### **Backpack Blowers**

1. Always use appropriate eye, ear and foot protection (closed toe shoes). Also, add a dust mask when, necessary such as in dusty conditions.
2. Do not use the blower to clean yourself.
3. Do not direct the blower toward bystanders.

### **Chain Saws/Powered Pruning Saw (SEE ALSO CHAIN SAW SAFETY)**

#### **Preparation**

1. Always wear appropriate helmet with ear and face shield protection while cutting. Always wear safety toe shoes. Also, chaps or the equivalent should be worn to protect legs, as well as a long sleeve shirt.
2. When transporting a chain saw by hand, stop the engine, grip the saw handle, place the muffler at the side away from your body and position the guide bar to the rear.
3. Do not remove the chain brake or alter handles, chain brake, chain or covers.

#### **Starting the saw**

1. Always start a chain saw/powered pruning saw on the ground. Engage the chain brake, place one foot through the bottom handle, hold the top handle and pull the starter rope.

2. Do not place a chain saw/powered pruning saw on your knee when starting it.

### **Cutting**

1. Always use both hands to maintain control of the chain saw/powered pruning saw.
2. When moving from tree to tree (or cut to cut) remove your finger from the trigger, activate the chain brake and keep the bar away from your body.
3. Only operate the chain saw below the level of your shoulders.
4. To prevent kickback, keep the nose of the bar clear of other nearby objects during cutting.
5. Do not set a saw down while the blade is engaged.
6. Stop the engine and turn the switch to "OFF" when the chain saw is to be left unattended.
7. Always have your thumb wrapped around the top handle of the saw in order to better maintain control of the saw.

### **Hedge and Tree Trimming**

#### **Attire**

1. Wear long sleeves, long pants and gloves when trimming hedges or when picking up cuttings from thorny shrubs.
2. Use eye protection, especially if using power equipment.
3. Do not wear dangling jewelry while using hedge clippers.
4. Use closed toe shoes.

#### **Preparation and position**

1. If you discover a bee hive or wasp nest while mowing or trimming, spray the nest with long distance aerosol insecticide labeled "Wasp and Bee Insecticide" and wait 24 hours before returning. When possible apply at dusk or dawn to minimize exposure to people and maximize exposure to pests (more likely to be in nest). After overnight or 24 hours test nest area with a long stick or pole to ensure that all bees or wasps are gone before continuing work.
2. Do not break branches, sticks or twigs over your legs or knees or under your feet. Use clippers, shears or a saw to cut them.
3. Make sure your position is stable and safe from falling debris.
4. Do not perform trimming of a limb if the limb is within 10 ft. of power lines or is overhanging.
5. Do not leave saws, clippers, shovels, rakes, and other equipment lying around in the work area.

#### **Hand Saws**

##### **Preparation**

1. Use sharp tools whenever possible! Do not use a dull saw.
2. Do not carry a saw by the blade.
3. Always use eye protection, and it is recommended to use closed toe shoes and gloves.

##### **Sawing**

1. Keep hands and fingers away from the saw blade while using the saw.
2. Keep control of saws by releasing downward pressure at the end of the stroke.

##### **Afterwards**

1. Oil saw blades after each use.

2. Return saws, clippers, and other cutting tools to their sheaths or guarded storage place after use.

### **Vehicle/Trailer Safety Preparation**

1. Do not exceed the load capacity as posted on the trailer.
2. No one is permitted to ride in the trailer.
3. Check to see that your trailer lights are working.

### **Loading**

1. Do not place all the heavy equipment on one side of the trailer.
2. Secure equipment and fuel tanks to the vehicle/trailer with chains or straps to eliminate or minimize shifting of the load.

### **Pulling the trailer**

1. Take slow, wide turns when towing trailers.
2. When towing a trailer, allow adequate time to stop.

### **Unloading**

1. Use ramps to load and unload mowers and edgers from the trailer.
2. Set the parking brake in the towing vehicle and use wheel blocks to chock the wheels of the trailer before removing any equipment from the trailer.

## **Lawn Mower Blade Removal and Sharpening**

### **Preparation**

1. Do not use grinding wheels that have chips, cracks or grooves.
2. Do not use the grinding wheel if it wobbles. Tag it "Out of Service".
3. Adjust the tongue guard so that it is no more than 1/4 inch from the grinding wheel.
4. Turn off the mower and remove the spark plug wire before removing the blade.
5. Use eye protection, hearing protection and closed toe shoes.

### **Removal and sharpening**

1. Use an extension ratchet, or an offset wrench, to remove cutting blades. If the equipment is fitted with a blade lockdown device, engage the lockdown before beginning the blade removal/installation process. If no lockdown device is available, keep the blade from turning or slipping by holding it with a gloved hand.
2. Do not try to stop the grinding wheel with your hand, even if you are wearing gloves.
3. Allow blade to cool after sharpening before reinstalling it on the mower.
4. Make sure the blade is balanced (the mower shouldn't wobble.)

## **PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER SPRAYING**

**DO NOT APPLY PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZERS UNLESS TRAINED AND CERTIFIED.**

## **GROUNDS KEEPING/MOWING LEARNING EXERCISE**

1. A chain saw should always be started on the ground with the chain brake engaged.  
TRUE/FALSE
2. The required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for a brush saw is eye protection, face protection, safety toe shoes, long pants and hand protection. TRUE/FALSE
3. Never trim a branch within 10 feet of a power line. TRUE/FALSE
4. Always remove the spark plug wire before working on a lawnmower to avoid starting the mower accidentally. TRUE/FALSE
5. It is all right to ride in a trailer when traveling off roads. TRUE/FALSE
6. Never break branches or sticks over your knees or under your feet.  
TRUE/FALSE
7. Never fill gas cans on the tailgate of a truck. TRUE/FALSE
8. It is acceptable for two people to be on a ladder as long as the ladder is long enough.  
TRUE/FALSE
9. Sun block and a long sleeve shirt is appropriate protection from the sun. TRUE/FALSE
10. Wait for all engine powered equipment to cool before refueling. TRUE/FALSE

## **Answers to GROUNDS KEEPING/MOWING LEARNING EXERCISE**

1. A chain saw should always be started on the ground with the chain brake engaged. TRUE/FALSE
2. The required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for a brush saw is eye protection, face protection, safety toe shoes, long pants and hand protection. TRUE/FALSE
3. Never trim a branch within 10 feet of a power line. TRUE/FALSE
4. Always remove the spark plug wire before working on a lawnmower to avoid starting the mower accidentally. TRUE/FALSE
5. It is all right to ride in a trailer when traveling off roads. TRUE/FALSE
6. Never break branches or sticks over your knees or under your feet. TRUE/FALSE
7. Never fill gas cans on the tailgate of a truck. TRUE/FALSE
8. It is acceptable for two people to be on a ladder as long as the ladder is long enough. TRUE/FALSE
9. Sun block and a long sleeve shirt is appropriate protection from the sun. TRUE/FALSE
10. Wait for all engine powered equipment to cool before refueling. TRUE/FALSE