

Sugar Grove Fire Department Lawn Maintenance Safety Training



Reason for the Training

- The Bourbonnais Fire Protection District in Bourbonnais, Illinois lost one of their members Saturday, April 26, 2003 when a firefighter was critically injured while mowing the fire station's lawn.

■ **LODD**

Bourbonnais LODD Story

- **Mower Accident Claims Illinois Firefighter**
- MARIA WAICKOWSKI, Editorial Staff - Firehouse.Com News
- **Posted:** Mon, 04/28/2003 - 12:00am
- The Bourbonnais Fire Protection District in Bourbonnais, Illinois lost one of their members Saturday, April 26 when a firefighter was critically injured while mowing the fire station's lawn. Bruce Spaulding, 49, from Bourbonnais, died at Loyola Medical Center in Maywood. He had served for the Bradley, Illinois Fire Department for 21 years prior to his retirement from Bradley. He had been a part-time employee of the Bourbonnais Fire Protection District since January 1, 2000. He had also been a Kankakee Area Career Center instructor, a vocational school that was made up of high school juniors and seniors, said Deputy Chief James Keener. Since the mid-1990s, he taught a two-year fire/rescue course at the career center. The lawn accident occurred when Spaulding was doing station duties, mowing the Armour Road station's lawn. Keener said that as a part of the fire station's part-time program, he was working a shift as an engineer. Spaulding was riding on the lawn mower when he hit a two step retaining wall. Both the lawnmower and Spaulding flew over the wall. He was thrown off of the lawnmower and went over the edge, down into the ditch and into a decorative stone. The lawnmower remained on the incline halfway between the embankment and the decorative stone. An autopsy is being performed today to gain more clarification about the situation, said Keener.
- Spaulding was first rushed to Provena St. Mary's Hospital in Kankakee. After being evaluated he was then flown by helicopter to Loyola Medical Center. Spaulding was very well liked and will certainly be missed, said Deputy Chief Keener. Spaulding is survived by his widow Denise, children Becky and Brian and step children, Krista and Andrew.

Each year over 87,000 Americans are injured while mowing the lawn.



This includes over 10,000 children. Of this 10,000 over 2,300 are injured seriously.

Before Operating

- Read the operator's manual to find out where controls are located and how they function, as every Lawn Mower, weed wacker, and leaf blower are different. Check for additional safety instructions in the operator's manual and know how to stop the machine quickly.
- Never allow untrained individuals to operate either the lawn mower, the weed wackers, and the leaf blower.
- Before starting the lawn mowing, weed wacking and leaf blower process, walk the area and pick up objects lying on the lawn. Tools, cans, bottles, wire, rocks, sticks, twigs, and limbs can be hazardous to bystanders and the operator.

Before Operating

- Check and see if the blades are sharp on the unit. Replace bent, warped, damaged or dull cutters.
- Check the fuel and oil levels.
- Ensure that shields and other guards are in place and working properly. Do not remove or disable guards or other safety devices.

Weed Wack with Proper Protective Equipment

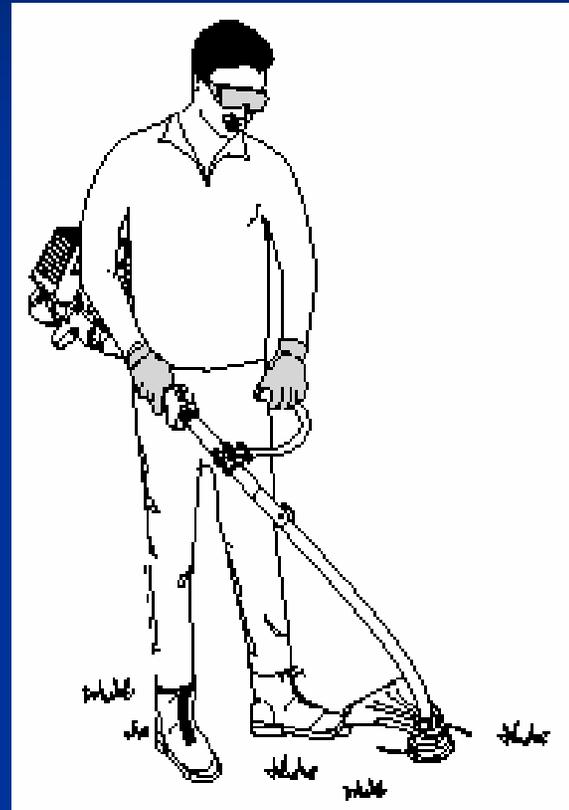


What is this guy wearing that is correctly protecting him?

What is this guy not wearing to protect himself?

Safety Protection

- Clothing protects the operator from thrown objects and sun exposure. Dress properly for the job, wearing long pants, long sleeves and close-fitting clothes.
- Tie back long hair and don't wear anything that could become entangled in the moving parts.



Boots



- Always wear sturdy, safety toe, non-slip soled shoes or boots when using the lawn mower and or weed wacker.

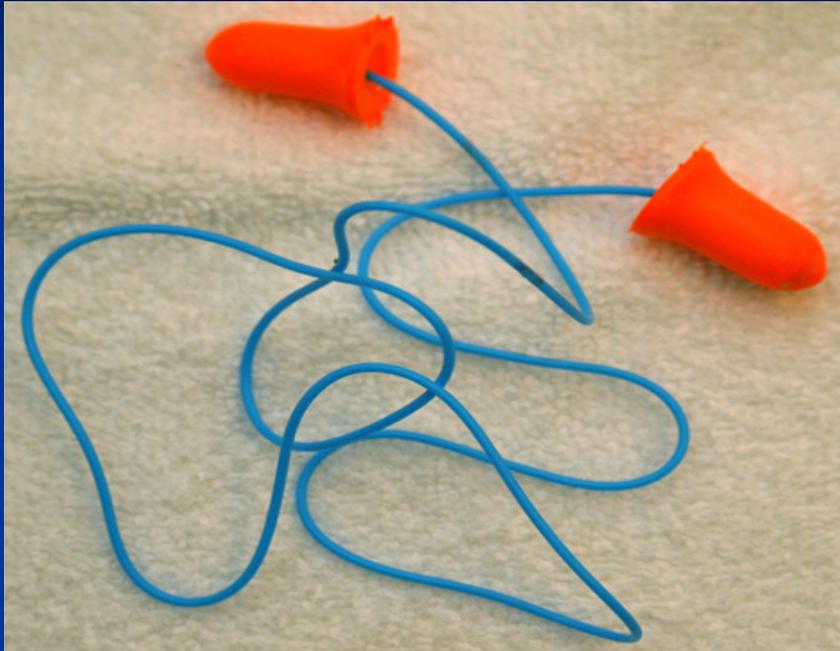
- This is why you don't wear open toe shoes aka. Flip Flops or Sandals

Eye Protection



- Use safety glasses and/or goggles to protect the eyes from dust, dirt, trash, and small rocks thrown by the blades.
- While Weed Wacking face screens in combination with safety glasses and/or goggles provide the best protection.

Ear Protection



- Use earplugs or noise reduction ear muffs to protect your hearing from engine and blade noises.
- Avoid long periods of noise exposure, major damage maybe done and hearing loss can occur.

Hand Protection



- Select equipment with anti-vibration components or wear gloves for protection.
- Protect hands by wearing gloves when handling the blades and other items which might be sharp, contain nicks, or have burrs on the edges.

22% of mower injuries involve the hands, fingers or wrist.

Safety Protection

- Operate the trimmer and leaf blower while standing upright, not bent over. Adjust the harness to suit your working positions if applicable.
- Drive riding mowers up and down inclines at a slow rate of speed (more to follow)
- Don't allow others to ride along on the mower
- Shut off the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire when making repairs or adjustments.

Fueling Safety



A gallon of gasoline has the explosive power of over 7 sticks of TNT!!!

- Use proper fuel
- Two cycle gas/oil mixture for the weed wacker and leaf blower
- Lawn mower is unleaded gas powered.
- Do not overfill the tank, leave room for expansion.
- Do not add any fuel if the engine is still hot; let it cool down before re-fueling.
- They should only be refueled outdoors, not in a garage or other enclosed area.
- Never light a match or smoke around gasoline. DAH!

Keep People at Safe Distances

- **WARNING** – Weed Wackers can throw objects violently, up to 50 feet. Keep people **AT LEAST 50 feet (100 foot radius)** away to avoid possible injury. Stop immediately if approached.

Keep People at Safe Distances

- **WARNING – The revolving blade of a lawn mower can throw objects at speeds of 200 miles per hour or the length of a football field in 1 second. There is no time to dodge thrown objects.**
- It takes an adult about two-thirds of a second to react to danger, and young children may react slower.

Operation of the Weed Wacker

- Start the unit on firm ground or other solid surface in an open area.
- Hold the unit with both hands. Keeping a firm footing.
- Keep the trimmer head below waist level.
- Always stand on the proper side of the trimmer while cutting. On a curved shaft unit, the line head rotation is clockwise (cut on the left side.)

Operation of Weed Wackers

- Bring the engine to operating speed before starting to cut vegetation.
- Do not operate engine faster than needed to effectively cut the vegetation.
- Be careful around buildings, trees, light posts, curbs and vehicles.
- Allow the engine to return to idle speed when not cutting.
- Always turn off the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire, if accessible, before attempting to unclog or adjust the weed wacker. To avoid placing hands near the blade, use a stick to remove the clog.

Keep Trimmer in Peak Operating Condition

- Inspect the weed wacker periodically for potential hazards such as loose belts, and missing or damaged guards. Also examine the weed wacker for accumulations of grass, leaves, or excessive grease to reduce fire hazard.
- Conduct routine maintenance and inspections before and after each use.

Shut Down the Weed Wacker

- Idle down the engine a few minutes to allow the engine to cool down.
- Stop the engine before putting the weed wacker down.
- Always clean the weed wacker after use. Do not spray cold water on hot engine.
- Secure the trimmer to prevent fuel spillage and damage during transport.
- Keep the cutter tool covered with the carrying guard.

Operating the Lawn Mower

- Sit on the machine
- Place steering handles to the neutral position (open and out position)
- Adjust the choke lever
- Ensure parking brake is engaged (or in the up position)
- Blade Clutch switch is in the off or down position
- Turn the key to start.
- Adjust the choke lever
- Throttle up the mower
- Engage the blades and start cutting grass by pulling up on the Blade Clutch switch

Steering the Lawn Mower

- Pushing both levers forward causes the mower to move forward.
- Pulling both levers back causes the mower to move backward.
- Pushing one lever ahead of the other lever causes the traction wheel on the side where the lever is ahead to rotate faster than the other traction wheel, making the mower turn toward the side where the lever is behind.
- When one lever is pushed forward and the other lever pulled back the same amount, one traction wheel will turn in reverse and the mower will turn within its own length

Warning

- **Note: The Steering Lever will return toward neutral when released, but they should be placed in neutral by the driver. If the Drive Handles are not placed in neutral, the tractor may creep.**

Other things to remember



NEVER go across a steep slope on a riding mower

Continued



Operate a riding mower up and down a steep slope

Other Items

- Remember to be cautious around parked cars. Blow the grass away from vehicles.
- Remember to be cautious around cars driving by on the roadways.
- Remember to be cautious around pedestrians walking to, from and around the farmers market.

None of this will be done!



Leaf Blower Usage

- Set the on button
- Squeeze throttle trigger and move the setting lever to the midway setting at the same time
- Release the throttle trigger
- Press the fuel pump bulb at least 5 times
- Place unit on the ground
- Ensure your footing is solid on the ground
- Pull the starting rope
- Once engine starts push the trigger once and allow the motor to idle
- To shut the leaf blower off press the on/off button to the off position (O)

Leaf blower

- Leaf blows can throw dust, dirt and objects violently, up to 50 feet. Keep people **AT LEAST 50 feet** away to avoid possible injury. Stop immediately if approached
- Be cautious around the muffler, burns may occur to the body.

Any questions



Now please take the Lawn Maintenance Safety Quiz.

- Reference Material from Cub Cadet, Stihl motors, Firehouse.com, VSU.edu, and web.dcp.ufl.edu