

Safety Talks!

Safety When Working Outdoors

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Groundskeeping can be a great job, a chance to work outdoors and perform a variety of interesting tasks—but this work also can be hazardous.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

For instance, mowers and other landscaping machinery commonly cause injuries. Cutting surfaces and other rotating parts, as well as rocks and debris fired from the spinning blades, cause cuts, amputations and eye injuries.

PROTECT YOURSELF

- Wear safety-toed footwear and maintain firm footing. Toes have been amputated when the operator's foot slid under a mower on a slippery slope.
- Wear impact resistant safety eyewear with side shields and be aware about the direction of discharge when you operate equipment that could send projectiles flying. These flying objects have caused serious eye injuries, and have even killed people when rocks, glass or wire penetrated the head or chest.
- Gasoline does lots of work for us in landscaping, but it has its hazards. Wait until an engine is cool before refueling. Keep sources of ignition such as cigarettes away from mowers and gasoline containers.
- Electric tools also can be hazardous. Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) with electric trimmers, saws and mowers. Keep them in good repair and away from moisture.

- Ride-on mowers and tractors are involved in many landscape and farm deaths. Don't carry passengers. Use only the load rating and attachments approved by the manufacturer. Use the rollover protection bars and screens supplied by the manufacturer or designed by a professional engineer.
- Ergonomics is an important consideration for landscape work. Choose and use tools with attention to preventing cumulative injuries. For example, use a shoulder strap to take some of the weight as you work a gasoline-powered portable weed trimmer.
- Groundskeepers sometimes encounter potentially infectious objects such as discarded needles. A puncture wound from a contaminated needle or other sharp object could possibly infect a person with a lethal bloodborne disease such as AIDS or Hepatitis B. Talk to your supervisor about how to dispose of these items safely. Tongs to pick them up and a sharps and needle collector can help you avoid contact.
- Overhead power lines also cause many fatalities among outdoor workers. Tree trimming, moving irrigation pipes and placing ladders can put you in contact with lethal amounts of electricity. Watch for power lines and have them shut down or guarded as necessary. Maintain safe distances.

FINAL WORD

Make sure you get training for your work in grounds maintenance. Understand the hazards and protect yourself. ■

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Sandals are a safe choice of footwear when you operate a mower or other landscaping equipment.
 True False
2. It is important to maintain safe footing and not slip or trip when operating a mower.
 True False
3. Flying objects thrown out by mowers and weed machines can cause eye injuries.
 True False
4. As long as you fuel gasoline tanks outdoors, there is no danger of fire or explosion.
 True False
5. GFCI stands for _____.

What Would You Do?

A new hire on your landscaping crew is questioning why she would need training about avoiding bloodborne pathogens. Could you explain the hazard to her?

T1906-01

Photocopy This Participant Handout - © T1906-01

Safety Talks! is intended for in-house use only - commercial reproduction is a violation of our copyright agreement. For a complete catalog of Bongarde Holdings Inc. products please call 1-800-667-9300. © MMIX - Printed in Canada. Bongarde Holdings Inc., #102-501 Main Street, Penticton, B.C. V2A 9A6 • US Div., 103 Eastside Oroville Road, Oroville WA 98844 www.SafetySmart.com

Safety Talks!

FOR THE LEADER

Seasonal Safety ■ T1906-01

BEFORE THE TALK 7 PREPARATION TIPS

- 1** Young workers often join groundskeeping crews in the summer as seasonal employees. If you have students working with you this summer, pay special attention to training and supervising them to work safely.
- 2** Every summer workers are killed using motorized equipment—tractors, golf carts, all-terrain vehicles and mowers. Even a small garden tractor can be lethal if it is not operated safely. Make sure everyone who is authorized to use this equipment is properly trained.
- 3** Pesticide application takes special training, authorization and protective equipment. Review your employer's safety policies about using garden chemicals including insecticides and herbicides.
- 4** Fertilizers must also be handled with care. Make sure your crew is following all safe procedures.
- 5** Stinging insects are a nuisance and sometimes a deadly hazard for outdoors workers. Watch for a safety talk on this topic coming up in this series.
- 6** Tree trimming is a hazardous occupation related to grounds maintenance. This work requires special training to prevent serious injury from falls, electrocution and other mishaps.
- 7** This safety meeting has something for everyone, even those who do not work in grounds maintenance. Many of your workers take care of yards and gardens at home, and this advice applies to them as well.

■ For information on a variety of safety topics, check out Bongarde's online network for safety professionals at <http://www.SafetyXChange.org>

■ If you want the latest in job safety news, tips, photos, health-related articles, fatality reports and audio talks, sign up for Safety Smart! Weekly Briefing at <http://www.SafetySmart.com>

AFTER THE TALK CHECKLIST

- Provided extra training to workers who did poorly on quiz
Date: _____
- Observed workers
Date: _____
- Refresher training
Date: _____

■ Other (describe)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Meeting conducted by: _____

MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY: Each participant is to sign below, for record kept on file.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Answers to T1906-01 Quiz:

1. False 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. Ground Fault Circuit Interruptor