

What is the hazard?

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), from 2008 to 2010, there were an estimated 35,000 consumer injuries related to riding lawnmowers that were treated in emergency departments in the US. Riding lawnmowers also kill more than 70 people each year around the country¹. To date in 2019, three Kentucky workers died in incidents involving riding lawnmowers.

Did you know the average weight of a riding lawnmower is about 485 pounds²?

The following riding lawnmower deaths occurred in Kentucky in 2019:

- A 21-year-old, working as a seasonal employee for a landscaping company, was operating a zero-turn lawnmower on a hill near an apartment complex. The mower began to roll and pinned the employee underneath. The victim died instantly due to massive blunt force trauma to the head and neck.
- A 46-year-old full-time landscaping worker was mowing a hill near a pond located at a private residence. Witnesses state that the employee lost control of the lawnmower and it entered the pond, trapping him underneath the water. Good Samaritans entered the pond, pulled the mower off the victim, and began administering CPR, but the victim died due to compressional asphyxiation.
- An 83-year-old farmer was mowing his property when he attempted to mow a hill leading to a pond. The victim lost control of the 14-horsepower mower he was operating, and it rolled into the pond, ejecting the farmer into the water. He was pronounced dead at the scene due to drowning.



Recommendations for the prevention of injury while operating riding lawnmowers:

- Do not use riding lawnmowers on slopes greater than 15 degrees. For slopes less than 15 degrees, mow up and down the slope, never across. Turn around on level ground located at the top or bottom of the slope.
- If a riding lawnmower is equipped with a roll-over protective structure (ROPS), ensure that it is in the raised position whenever the mower is in use. If the mower does not have a ROPS, contact the manufacturer to inquire about available retrofit kits. Ensure mowers with ROPS are also equipped with a seatbelt.
- Wait for the blades to come to a complete stop before removing clogged grass, adjusting the blade settings, or crossing a gravel road.
- Always wear eye and hearing protection. A normal riding lawnmower produces sound levels of 90 decibels³.

Further Resources:

Name of Resource	Resource Description	Resource Link
Dangers of Roll-Overs of Riding Mowers	OSHA fact sheet concerning the dangers of riding mowers, incidents of riding mower fatalities, required training, and safety considerations.	https://www.osha.gov/dsg/riding_mowers/
Landscaping—Riding Lawn Mowers	Fact sheet from Canada’s OSHA that discusses PPE, mower preparation, and mowing tips to stay safe.	https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/landscaping/lawnmower.html
Toro Zero Turn Operator Safety Training	Free training video produced by the Toro Company on how to properly operate a zero-turn riding	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCVbnTI-b6M
Noise Levels for Common Equipment	List of noise levels for commonly-used equipment. Lists the equipment, the sound level, noise reduction rating needed, and time allowed if no noise protection is used. List provided by the University of Florida.	http://webfiles.ehs.ufl.edu/noiselvl.pdf

For additional training materials and information regarding the KOSHS program, please visit the program website at: <http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/koshs/index.html>

Let us know what you think about this alert! [Click here to take a brief, anonymous survey.](#)

Sources

- [1] <https://ag-safety.extension.org/riding-lawnmower-safety>
- [2] <https://peakyard.com/riding-lawn-mower-weight/>
- [3] <http://webfiles.ehs.ufl.edu/noiselvl.pdf>

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