

# Landscaping Safety



Spring has sprung! For many homes and businesses, that means it's time to clean up the yard and landscaping. Between 2013 and 2015, there were an average of 35,000 emergency room visits resulting from accidents involving walk-behind mowers. Today, I wanted to review some basics of yard work safety as a reminder to stay safe while doing it.

## General Tips

- ❖ Be sure to stretch or engage in some light exercise to warm up before you begin.
- ❖ Dress appropriately for the job. Sturdy, non-slip shoes, work gloves, and pants provide good protection. Layers are a great idea in the spring, as temperatures can vary significantly during the day.
- ❖ Prepare your work area by clearing any trip hazards or wet leaves, as they can be very slippery.
- ❖ When using a ladder, ensure that the feet are firmly planted and never stand on the top rung.

## Mower Safety

- ❖ Fill the gas tank before you start, as adding fuel to a hot engine can be dangerous.
- ❖ Walk the area before mowing and remove any branches or rocks that the mower could throw up. This can be very dangerous and is why you shouldn't have kids or pets out on the lawn when mowing.
- ❖ Ensure the safety features on the mower are operational.
- ❖ When mowing, push the mower forward and avoid pulling it backwards. Keep the blades moving away from you. You are more likely to trip and fall when walking backward.
- ❖ If you are mowing on a slope with a walk-behind mower, mow across the slope. Go up and down with a riding mower to avoid tipping over.

## Tree Maintenance

- ❖ Be honest with yourself about your knowledge and skill level when working at heights, around power lines, and with falling branches.
- ❖ If you will work around power lines, contact the utility company to de-energize or ground those lines before you begin.
- ❖ Ensure you have all the necessary personal protective equipment, including gloves, hard hats, hearing protection, safety glasses, and face masks.
- ❖ Consider the lean of the tree and take the appropriate action. A forward-leaning tree can be very hazardous to cut, and if you are unsure of how to proceed, it is best to call a professional.