



## Groundskeeping Safety

Groundskeeping can be hazardous work. Weather, noise, equipment, insects and chemicals can all pose risks—such as physical injuries or health complications from repeated exposure to noise levels and toxic inhalants—amid groundskeeping tasks. Fortunately, you can take the following precautions to prevent injuries while performing groundskeeping duties at work.

### Watch for Slip, Trip and Fall Hazards

Slips, trips and falls may result from the following:

- Improper footwear—Wear nonslip shoes to reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls.
- Distracted walking—Multitasking (e.g., talking or texting on a cellphone) can cause you to lose your focus while walking. Try to avoid these distractions.
- Unmarked obstacles—Curbs and parking blocks could pose hazards and should be painted with brightly colored paint. Always watch for these obstacles.
- Inadequate lighting—Slips, trips and falls are more common when walking surfaces aren't properly illuminated. Exercise caution in these areas.
- Inclement weather—Rain could lead to dangerous walking conditions. Be especially careful when working in inclement weather.

### Be Aware of Power Lines

You should always work at least 10 feet away from any power lines. If there are lines within 10 feet of the work area during tree trimming operations, power should be shut off before work begins.

### Always Wear PPE

When performing groundskeeping tasks in municipal buildings and parks, the safety of our team members is paramount. To ensure personal safety, it's crucial that you always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). This includes gloves to protect your hands, eye protection when working with debris, and hearing protection when necessary. Additionally, don't forget to use sunblock and wear protective clothing to shield yourself from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays, especially during sunny days.

### Operate Equipment Safely

When operating equipment, be mindful of your surroundings. Look for power lines, particularly when using equipment or performing tasks at height. When mowing, pay attention to steep hills and operate equipment as safely as possible to prevent it from rolling.

When working on a piece of equipment, make sure all moving parts have stopped before placing your hands in areas to unplug or change parts. In addition, always wear gloves and do not allow your bare skin to touch the engine or other hot metal parts.

### Exercise Caution with Tree and Shrub Maintenance

Tree and shrub maintenance often involves tasks performed at heights and in close proximity to power lines. To minimize risks, exercise caution when working on elevated surfaces, always following proper ladder safety protocols. Be vigilant about the presence of overhead power lines when pruning or trimming trees and maintain a safe distance to avoid accidents. Furthermore, take care to watch for wildlife, including nests and burrows, before commencing work to ensure the safety of all living creatures in the area.

## Mowing and Edging Safely

When it comes to mowing and edging, safety is paramount. Before starting, ensure the area is clear of debris and objects that could become dangerous projectiles when struck by the mower. Always be aware of your surroundings and avoid mowing on slopes or uneven terrain, which can increase the risk of accidents. Use extreme caution when operating mowers on wet or slippery surfaces to prevent slips and falls.

## Prioritize Ergonomics

Some groundskeeping tasks—including lifting heavy objects and conducting repetitive motions—can result in ailments such as lower back pain, muscle strains, ligament and tendon injuries, spinal disc degeneration, shoulder injuries, and tennis elbow. Using ergonomically designed tools and practicing proper body mechanics can help minimize injuries amid these tasks by reducing the strain on your body. If lifting an object is too heavy or awkward, have someone help you.

## Take Steps to Avoid Heat-related Illnesses

To reduce the risk of heatstroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash while performing groundskeeping work in hot weather, utilize these measures:

- Wear thin, lightly colored pants, as well as a long-sleeved shirt and a hat to protect your skin from the sun.
- Use sunscreen and reapply it during your shift to prevent sunburn.
- Take breaks in the shade.
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated.

Monitor how you feel when working in the heat and rest as needed to avoid getting overheated.

## Conclusion

Using these groundskeeping safety tips can help protect you at work. Contact your supervisor if you have any additional questions or concerns.