

# PSC Safety Fax

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### Weekly Safety Meeting "Lawn Mower Safety"

If you would rather receive your Safety Fax via E-mail please let us know by sending a request to [psc@pscsafe.com](mailto:psc@pscsafe.com).

The fax is sent in Adobe PDF format, which is free to download.

### OSHA FORM 300A MUST BE POSTED BY FEBRUARY 1, 2003

You must post your 2002 Summary Of Work-Related Injuries And Illnesses form (OSHA Form 300-A) by February 1. It must remain posted in a conspicuous place where notices to employees are customarily posted through April 30, 2003. **The form must be signed by the President or CEO of the company, not his designee as in the past.**

**If you have any questions or concerns please call our office for assistance**

### WORKER'S INJURY AT KILLEEN, TEXAS, BRINGS OSHA PENALTIES OF \$182,500

DALLAS -- A Greensboro, N.C., company's alleged failure to protect employees with adequate fall protection equipment at its Killeen, Texas, worksite has resulted in proposed penalties of \$182,500 from OSHA.

Oakwood Homes Corp., headquartered in Greensboro, N.C., was cited on Feb. 21 with two alleged willful, 16 alleged serious and six alleged other-than-serious safety violations following an OSHA inspection that began Sept. 13, 2002. The inspection resulted from a complaint when a worker was injured at the company's Killeen worksite. The company, which manufactures mobile homes, employs about 9,000 workers nationwide. In November, as part of a Chapter 11 restructuring, Oakwood Homes closed its plants and wholesale locations throughout Texas, including the Killeen plant, which employed about 280 workers.

The two alleged willful violations were cited for failing to provide fall protection equipment on open-sided platforms and roofs in accordance with OSHA standards. Oakwood Homes Corp. had several citations notifying them of requirements for guardrail systems in their other plants around the nation. A willful violation is defined as an intentional disregard of or plain indifference to the requirements of the OSHA Act and regulations.

The 16 alleged serious violations were issued for failing to follow lock out/tag out procedures (improper control of hazardous energy) and failing to provide protection against electrical hazards. A serious violation is one that could cause death or serious physical harm to employees and the employer knew or should have known of the hazard.

The six alleged other-than-serious violations were issued for the improper storage of materials, which could create tripping hazards, and blocking the access to an exit. An other-than-serious violation is a hazardous condition that would probably not cause death or serious physical harm, but would have a direct and immediate relationship to the safety and or health of the employees. **OSHA News Release**

### TEXAS ELECTRICAL COMPANY AGREES TO PAY OSHA PENALTIES OF \$86,800 NUECES ELECTRIC WILL INCREASE ITS SAFETY AND HEALTH EFFORTS

DALLAS -- Nueces Electric Cooperative Inc., headquartered in Robstown, Texas, has agreed to strengthen its safety and health program and pay \$86,800 in penalties for citations issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration in the wake of an accident in August that resulted in an employee losing both arms.

OSHA's Corpus Christi area office began its investigation Aug. 12, 2002, following the injury of a worker who received an electrical shock while installing a transformer from a lift bucket truck. The employee's arms were later amputated. Nueces Electric Cooperative employs about 125 workers.

According to OSHA Corpus Christi Area Director John Giefer, the agency cited the cooperative with nine alleged safety violations including failure to assess workplace hazards, failure to implement an effective health and safety program, failure to ensure employees were adequately trained in working with power transmission lines, failure to enforce the use of personal protective equipment and failure to adequately protect employees from exposure to energized power lines that can result in electrocution.

In addition to correcting all the citation items, Nueces has begun an analysis of employee work tasks to identify routine hazards and ensure employees follow established safety guidelines for working around hazardous power lines.

## LAWN MOWER SAFETY

Spring is usually hectic. First of all, there are a lot of chores to complete. And then thrown into the mix are the various holidays, graduations, maybe even Spring planting. All this apart, there is the abundant grass to mow. While too much rain can postpone the planting season a little, nothing really prevents grass from growing. And so the mowers come out. Since it is such a common activity, there is a tendency to view lawn mowing as being less hazardous than is really the case. The following is a safety guide explaining how to minimize risk while using a lawn mower.

The blade on the common lawn mower rotates to provide approximately 52 cuts per second. Translated into feet, the tip of the cutting blade of the mower travels about 300 feet in the same second. This is not an amusing fact. Each year, it is not uncommon to read or hear about the individual's foot that was caught underneath a walk-behind mower or a passing car. Or about the person whose eye got hit by an object thrown by a mower. Or the child that was backed over by a riding lawn mower. Increasingly, there seem to be more instances of the larger riding lawn tractors overturning and pinning the operator. Here are a few reminders of techniques for safe operation with a walk-behind mower:

1. READ the owners manual—it contains information about your specific mower.
2. Wear proper clothing—close fitting clothes and shoes with toes and traction soles (preferably leather).
3. Eye protection is always recommended. Ear protection will reduce the level of noise heard.
4. Clear the area to be mowed of debris that may be thrown—the same updraft that helps raise the grass for better mowing also helps to pick up objects.
5. Keep children and other bystanders away from the mowing area.
6. Mow in a FORWARD direction—more difficult at times but safer.
7. When mowing on a slope, mow ACROSS the slope with a walk-behind mower—this keeps a better distance between you and mower in case of a slip.
8. Wait till the grass is dry before mowing—very difficult to do in years such as this. When the grass is growing rapidly, there is typically more grass left from the previous cutting. This retains moisture and causes slips. This is in addition to the lack of traction normally available on wet grass.
9. ALWAYS shut off the mower before adjusting or clearing clogs.
10. Allow the mower to cool before refueling. Use only approved safety containers to store fuel.
11. For riding mowers, follow the above recommendations except for #6. For riding lawn mowers, always mow UP and DOWN the slope. The other considerations that need to be followed with riding mowers, in addition to the above, are:
  - A. NEVER carry passengers.
  - B. Remove the ignition key after each use.
  - C. Use age 10 as a guideline to allow youth to operate riding mowers. It is not until this age that many youths have developed the cognitive and motor abilities needed for safe operation. Even at this age, adult supervision is a necessity. The experience gained by safely and successfully operating a riding lawn mower can provide a solid base for operating larger equipment and vehicles in the future.
  - C. Use a 15% slope as the maximum to attempt to mow. For a man of 5'8", this would translate conservatively into three average steps and the height of the knee. If after taking three steps, you have risen more than the height of your knee, the slope is too steep.
  - D. Keep all safety devices, switches, guards, and shields in place and working.
  - E. Before dismounting, shut off the engine and allow attachments to stop moving.