POLICY GUIDELINES AND SAFETY TIPS FOR EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTEER DIOCESE OF AMARILLO
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Safety first!

When you need to deal with power tools like a lawnmower, the words “Safety First” even comes with more reality.

US Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that more than 60,000 people including 9000 children get injured each year from the unsafe operation of lawnmower and no doubt, this number is so alarming but you can lessen the opportunities to get hurt if you can follow safety rules.

DIOCESAN POLICY

A VOLUNTEER must be fourteen (14) through fifteen (15) years old to operate a PUSH lawnmower ONLY.
   • Read the lawnmower operator's manual, instructions on the mower, and warnings.

A VOLUNTEER must be sixteen (16) through seventeen (17) to operate a PUSH and or RIDING lawnmower ONLY.
   • Read the lawnmower operator's manual, instructions on the mower, and warnings.

A VOLUNTEER must be eighteen (18) years or older to operate equipment but not limited to the following.
push or riding lawnmowers; trimmers and edgers; ladder; tractors; saws; tillers; mulchers.
   • Read the lawnmower operator's manual, instructions on the mower, and warnings.

A VOLUNTEER must read the policy and sign the WAIVER AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY and location file it in a do not remove/delete folder in the church office.

EMPLOYEES concerning Workers’ Compensation in Texas must be 18 years of age or older to operate equipment but not limited to the following.
push or riding lawnmowers; trimmers and edgers; ladder; tractors; saws; tillers; mulchers.

The employee/volunteer must show maturity, good judgment, strength, and coordination to do the job.

SET EXPECTATIONS and make sure they have what they need. It is important to teach them how to use a lawnmower. Spend time showing him or her how to do the job safely. Supervise until you are sure that he or she can manage the task alone.

TYPES OF LAWNMOWER INJURIES

Injury from Cuts lacerations

By far, the most common kinds of lawnmower injuries occur from lacerations or cuts. However, damage happens usually to the hands and feet from the sharp blades.
Injury from burns

Engine and gas tank becomes too hot that can be a reason to get burnt if they are not correctly handled. An exhausting system that produces high temperatures can cause burn as well.

Missile Injuries

A full range missile particle such as wires, loose objects can bring severe injury if you are not well protected while operating.

Spinning blades that can scatter with a speed around 100 mph leave you in danger very often.

Fractures (Broken Bones)

It is observed that one of the most common lawn mower-related injuries is a fracture that usually happens from tripping or slipping under an active mower. Fractures occur most commonly to the fingers and hands and next to the legs.

SAFETY TIPS

Before mowing the lawn:

- Make sure that people are indoors or at a safe distance well away from the area that you plan to mow.
- Read the lawnmower operator's manual and the instructions on the mower.
- Check conditions:
  - Do not mow during bad weather, such as during a thunderstorm.
  - Do not mow wet grass.
  - Do not mow without enough daylight.
- Clear the mowing area of any objects such as twigs, stones, and toys, that could be picked up and thrown by the lawnmower blades.
- Make sure that protective guards, shields, the grass catcher, and other types of safety equipment are placed properly on the lawnmower and that your mower is in good condition.
- If your lawnmower is electric, use a ground fault circuit interrupter to prevent electric shock.
- Never allow a passenger on ride-on lawn mowers or garden tractors.
- Never deactivate safety devices and never even give a try to lift or repair mower while the engine is running.
Engage tools, not your hands.

A lawnmower can get clogged with grass or debris. Use a stick instead of your hands or feet to clean them.

While mowing:

- Wear sturdy closed-toe shoes with slip-proof soles, close-fitting clothes, safety goggles or glasses with side shields, and hearing protection.

- Watch for objects that could be picked up and thrown by the mower blades, as well as hidden dangers. Tall grass can hide objects, holes, or bumps. Use caution when approaching corners, trees, or anything that might block your view.

- If the mower strikes an object, stop, turn the mower off, and inspect the mower. If it is damaged, do not use it until it has been repaired.

- Do not pull the mower backwards or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look behind you when you mow in reverse.

- Use extra caution when mowing a slope.
  - When a walk-behind mower is used, mow across the face of slopes, not up and down, to avoid slipping under the mower and into the blades.
  - With a riding mower, mow up and down slopes, not across, to avoid tipping over.

- Keep in mind that lawn trimmers also can throw objects at high speed.

- Remain aware of where people are and do not allow them near the area where you are working.

Stop the engine and allow it to cool before refueling.

Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before:

- Crossing gravel paths, roads or other areas
- Removing the grass catcher
- Unclogging the discharge chute
- Walking away from the mower
Volunteer Applicant

Waiver and Release From Liability

Read the Lawn Mowing Guidelines and the Volunteer Applicant Carefully Before Signing.

Warning:

The possibility of serious physical injury and death associated with mowing/landscaping projects.

In consideration of the acceptance of my application for volunteer participation in mowing/landscaping project, I __________________________ hereby freely agree to and make the following contractual representation and agreement.

I __________________________ fully realize and understand the dangers involved in mowing/landscaping and fully realize and understand the health and safety risks associated with this type of project. I fully assume the risks associated with mowing and or landscaping by way of example but not limited to the following.

- The dangers associated with site preparation and handling products, materials, and equipment;
- The dangers from common outdoor tripping and slipping hazards;
- The dangers involved in operating power tools and using common lawn tools and techniques;
- The dangers from falling and or mishandling materials and objects.
- The dangers arising from weather conditions, equipment failure, inadequate safety equipment;
- And the possibility of serious physical injury and death associated with mowing/landscaping projects.

I, therefore, assume all risk of injury and/or death associated with mowing/landscaping project and I will not hold the event organizers, sponsors, or anyone affiliated with them for any circumstances of this event.

I hereby confirm that I am fourteen (14) through fifteen (15) years old to operate a Push lawn mower ONLY.

I hereby confirm that I am sixteen (16) through seventeen (17) to operate a Push and or a Riding lawn mower ONLY.

I hereby confirm that I am eighteen (18) years or older to operate equipment but not limited to the following.

- Push or riding lawnmowers; trimmers and edgers; ladder; tractors; saws; tillers; mulchers.

I hereby confirm that I have no existing medical or mental condition which to my knowledge would endanger myself or others if I volunteer or would interfere with my ability to volunteer.

I hereby confirm that I have read the Diocese of Amarillo Lawnmower Guidelines And Safety Tips For Employee And Volunteer.

I hereby waive, release, indemnify, hold harmless and forever discharge the Roman Catholic Diocese of Amarillo, the owner of the premises and its entities, including all parent companies, affiliates, subsidiaries, assigns, their volunteers, agents, sponsors, servants, employees, officers, directors, affiliates, successors and assigns, and their respective heirs, representatives, legal counsel, licensees and all persons, firms, corporations liable or who might be liable, whether or not herein
named, none whom admit any liability to the undersigned, but all expressly denying liability (herein the “Released Parties” and collectively with I the “Parties”), from any and all claims, demands, debts, contracts, expenses, causes of action, lawsuits, damages and liabilities, of every kind and nature, sustained by me directly or indirectly, whether known or unknown, in law or equity, which I have or may hereafter have, arising from or in any way relating to my participation in any of the mowing / landscaping projects, or travel to or return from the project.

By this **WAIVER AND RELEASE**, I assume any risk, and take full responsibility and warranty of any and all claims of personal injury and death or damages to but not limited to my use of the Released Parties’ facilities and/or engaging in the Release Parties’ activities or other activities on and near the Release Parties’ premises are used.

This WAIVER AND RELEASE contains the full and complete agreement between the Parties, the terms are contractual and not merely a recital, and supersedes any and all prior written or oral agreements and representations between the Parties concerning the activities and the WAIVER AND RELEASE. Any additions to or changes in this WAIVER AND RELEASE shall be valid only if set forth in writing and signed by all the Parties. Furthermore, this WAIVER AND RELEASE is binding upon the undersigned and his/her respective spouse, heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, representatives, successors and assigns. This WAIVER AND RELEASE shall be subject to the laws of the State of Texas. The provisions of this WAIVER AND RELEASE will remain in issue and in full force and effect even after termination of the Parties’ activities.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and fully agree to the terms of this **WAIVER AND RELEASE** and its contents. I understand and confirm that by signing this **WAIVER AND RELEASE** I have given up considerable future legal rights. I have signed this **WAIVER AND RELEASE** voluntarily, under no duress or threat of duress, without inducement, promise, or guarantee being communicated to me. My signature is proof of my intention to execute a complete and unconditional **WAIVER AND RELEASE** of all liability to the full extent of the law. I am mentally competent to enter into this waiver.

This agreement may not be modified orally, and a waiver of any provision shall not be construed as a modification of any other provisions herein or as a consent to any other provision herein or as a consent to any subsequent waiver or modification.

Undersigned is waiving “negligence claims, gross negligence claims, personal injury claims, and mental anguish claims.”

Volunteer Name: _______________________________ Telephone: _______________

Volunteer Address: _______________________________________________________

Whom to notify in case of emergency: __________________________ Telephone: _______________

Signature of Volunteer: __________________________ Date: _______________

**PARENT OR GUARDIAN of a minor**, under the age of eighteen; I as parent or guardian of the above named minor, hereby give my permission for my child or ward to volunteer in mowing/landscaping project, and further agree, individually and on behalf of my child or ward, to the terms of the above.

_____________________________ __________________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian Date