PURPOSE

This University of Nevada, Reno Facilities Services Department Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) provides guidelines to the Grounds Services personnel for the operation of mowers.

GENERAL

The following procedure outlines steps for the safe and effective use of mowing equipment, including how to inspect mowers prior to use, use of the mowers, and post use procedures. Any mower found to have a defect, not operating properly, or is otherwise unsafe to use must be tagged out of operation and reported to a supervisor immediately.

PROCEDURE

Pre-Use Inspection of Mower

1. An initial walk around the mower is required prior to use each day;
2. Look for any pooled fluids or other indications of a leak;
3. Check handle and look for any missing or broken parts, broken welds, or metal fatigue;
4. Inspect tires; look for foreign objects that could cause a flat; check air pressure (low pressure greatly effects grass cut height);
5. Inspect mower deck and make sure there is no damage, broken welds, or missing parts;
6. Raise mower deck into the air and inspect the cutting blade; look for any damage, cracks, dents, or dullness; if any damage is found, request a replacement blade from the mechanic prior to use;
7. Check oil, hydraulic fluid, and coolant (if applicable); fill fuel tank prior to reporting to assigned areas for mowing.
8. Make sure ROPs are up on riding mowers.
**Operation of Mower**

1. Ensure mowing area is clear of people, trash and obstructions; set throttle at ¼ speed or lower; start the engine;
2. Set throttle at half or lower speed, then engage the blades; once engaged, place the throttle at full speed;
3. Most flat surfaces can be mowed at full forward speed;
4. When turning or approaching a hazard, reduce speed to reduce rollover risk and minimize damage if required space is misjudged;
5. Mow slopes and wet slopes with walk behind mowers or slope-mower to reduce the risk of an accident or loss of control; use slope mower for inclines over 30% or 25% slope;
6. When possible, mowing direction will be varied to prevent ruts, compaction, and allow for proper lawn growth (supervisors will monitor mowing direction frequently and assign appropriately);
7. Monitor oil pressure and engine temperature gauges, if applicable, throughout the day;
8. When using a riding mower, ensure ROPs are in place if equipped with them.

**End of Work Shift**

1. Turn off mower;
2. As mower cools down begin to inspect for any damage that may have occurred during the day;
3. Wait approximately five minutes before washing mower;
4. First, remove any bags and open up compartments to access areas where grass builds up; scrape all heavy grass off with a flat blade; wash mower with water;
5. Before storing mower, fill fuel so it is ready for the next use;
6. Grease all fittings as necessary, usually once per week as shown in the manual.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The Grounds Services supervisors are responsible for the implementation of this SOP within area(s) of responsibility.

**TRAINING**

All Grounds Services employees will receive training on this SOP prior to using any mower. The supervisors shall ensure regular review of and compliance with this SOP.

**COMPLIANCE**

Compliance with all UNR and FMS policies and procedures is required of each employee. Failure to comply with this SOP may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Nevada System of Higher Education Prohibitions and Penalties, and/or the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents Handbook.