

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## TOPIC C112: SOD CUTTERS (WALK BEHIND)

**Introduction:** Sod cutters are only as safe as those operating them. Let's review the safety guidelines for sod cutters:

**General Information**

- Always read and understand the manufacturer's operation and maintenance manual. Never run the engine in an unventilated area
- Inspect the machine for wear, defects, and damage before beginning, if necessary repair before using
- Replace any warning labels if they're missing or no longer readable
- Use a ramp to unload and load heavy sod cutters, if a ramp isn't available, use safe lifting techniques and get help from co-workers
- Before moving the cutter, make sure the blade is in transport position, push the blade lever forward to raise the blade, and then pull the throttle while keeping a firm grip on the handlebar
- To make turns, push down on the handlebar, then turn. Load or unload the cutter by driving in low gear
- Fuel the cutter before starting, if you need to refuel, let the engine cool down first, and don't smoke
- Check the cutters engine and clutch/gear box oil levels before operating
- Inspect the area to be cut, and remove any objects that could be a hazard; mark all sprinklers and valves
- Wear safety glasses or goggles, and a full-face shield when needed, and safety boots or shoes
- Wear earplugs or earmuffs depending on the noise level. You may need gloves for some operations
- Always start the cutter with the shift lever in neutral. Don't put your hands or feet near any moving parts
- Never remove any guards from the machine when operating, and replace them after doing maintenance
- Stop before shifting gears. Don't shift with throttle engaged. To engage the reverse gear, you may have to push the machine back and forth while pulling the shift lever. Never put your hands or feet near the cutter
- End your cuts by pushing the blade engagement lever forward while still holding the throttle to cut the end of the sod strip as the blade rises
- Don't attempt sharp turns while cutting, and don't cut at high speeds
- To test the ground's hardness, push a screwdriver into the ground 2 to 3 inches, if you can't do that, water the sod and wait one day

**General Operations:** Position the sod cutter at your starting point with the blade out of the ground.

- Pull the blade engagement lever toward you with one hand while lifting the handlebar with the other hand
- Place the shift lever in low gear, pull the throttle while keeping a slight down pressure on the handlebar and cut a short distance, then stop. Put shift lever in neutral, lift the edge of the sod to check the cut depth
- To change the depth, push the blade lever forward, unlock the depth lock knob and turn the adjustment knob clockwise for less depth, or counterclockwise for more depth; then lock knob
- Don't turn the machine on its side, this can cause gas spillage

**Operating on hills:** When operating on hills you'll need to work harder to steer and maintain balance.

- Don't operate on hills over a 35% grade to prevent the machine from rolling over
- Cut down rather than across hills. Avoid hillside turns. Always back up hills in reverse; then cut, going down

**Conclusion:** Keep all unnecessary persons out of the work area. When approached, disengage the cutter. Use these guidelines for safe sod cutting.

**Employee Attendance:**(Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)


These guidelines do not supersede local, state or federal regulations, and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.