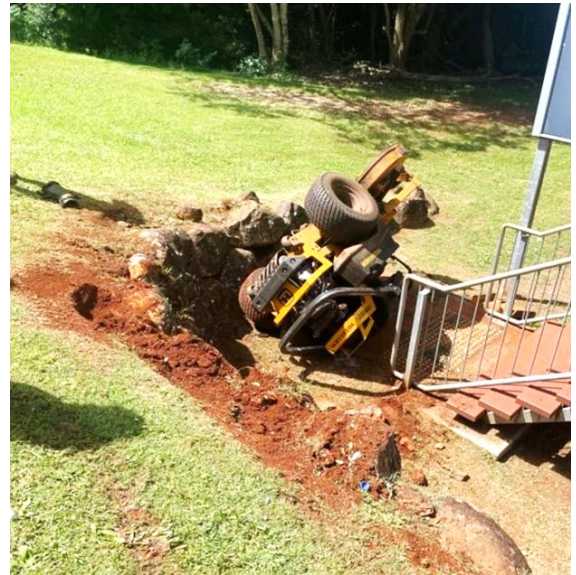


Ride-on mowers including zero turn equipment

The Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (R 214) imposes specific duties in relation to powered mobile plant.

The requirements apply to ride on mowers and include the management of risks associated with:

- the plant (mower) overturning
- things falling on the operator of the plant
- the operator being ejected from the plant
- the plant colliding with a thing or person.



Mower rollover off a rock retaining wall.

A number of incidents have occurred recently resulting in mower **roll-overs** and **rider ejection**. Risk of roll over is increased when a ride on mower is operated on sloping ground. Zero turn mowers can also be **unstable on uneven** ground. Mowing near and under trees or overhanging structures also creates risk of items **falling, hitting or dislodging** the operator.

What are schools to do?

- Ensure mower/equipment is **fit for purpose**. Review where ground maintenance is required e.g. sloping areas, areas beside retaining walls with fall hazards, areas under trees, uneven ground.
 - Determine if existing equipment is appropriate. Some areas may be excluded from ride on mowing due to the hazards associated with the area or terrain.
 - Consider if challenging slopes or other areas can be managed in a different way e.g. different plantings, trees or landscaping to remove the ongoing need for mowing
 - When purchasing new equipment discuss the terrain, layout and features (such as slopes) with suppliers to assist with the identification of the safest option for your location.
- Review the Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) for ride-on mowers and ensure that the **manufacturer's instructions** are incorporated into the operation of the mower i.e. confirm:
 - the maximum slope that the manufacturer has stated for the operation of the mower
 - the area can be accessed safely to enable mowing down the slope – **not** across.
- Ensure staff operating the ride on mower/s are aware of the SOP and are **competent in the safe use** of the equipment.
 - Competency – supplier information, supplier demonstration/operational training, manufacturer's information/ videos, mentoring, supervision.
 - Have processes in place to ensure casual/temporary staff can competently operate the mower or receive training and supervision to do so.
 - Keep records of staff induction, training and competency.

- Ensure ride on mowers and equipment have regular checks and are **well maintained**. Keep records of regular checks and repairs.
 - Confirm all safety features are in good condition and operating effectively e.g. seat belt, seat cut-off switch, guards.
 - Check that safety features to protect the operator from identified risks are functioning e.g. roll-over protection (ROPs) or falling objects protective structures (FOPs) where required.

Contracted mowing / maintenance services

- If mowing is contracted out, the contractor is to be provided with explicit information about the site-specific hazards before work starts. For new contracts this may include a site walk around for the contractor to make an assessment and determine if they have the appropriate skills and correct equipment.
- Inform the contractor of previous issues/experience e.g. near misses to highlight foreseeable risks.
- Ensure the contractor develops, documents and provides a safe system of work that manages the identified risks at your location. This should include the type of equipment to be used.
- Discuss the contractor's risk management plan and safe work method statements to confirm that these meet the needs of the school e.g. working hours, sign in. Seek any other assurances e.g. evidence such as manufacturer's instruction for ride on equipment stipulating gradient limits for mowing.
- Advise the contractor of any changed conditions prior to each job e.g. recent rain has resulted in wash off, slippage or soft edges. Regularly review the plan with the contractor.

Further information

- General information about equipment and machinery is provided on the department's [Hazards and risks](#) webpage
- For more information, contact your [Regional Health & Safety Consultant](#).
- [Equipment maintenance record](#) (template)
- Ride on mower safe operating procedures ([SOP](#)).