

# SAFETY ALERT

## 365 – Debris Entangled in Mower

### Background

An Open Space worker was using a Green Climber Remote Control mower on a large site when he ran over steel rebar that had been left by another contractor and was hidden in the grass. The worker immediately stopped the mower and ended up having to remove the mower from site to have the entanglement removed and the mower blades repaired.

foreign objects may become entangled in the mowing blades.



The result was a considerable loss of production downtime, property damage, costs applied to remove the entanglement and repair the machine.

The **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – Ride-On Mower Operation** includes a section on safe ways to remove entangled items from ride on mower blades or mowing decks. This procedure is the only approved methodology for removing a foreign object, or correct actions if a worker cannot safely complete this in the field.

Programmed workers operate several types of ride on mowers to maintain a diverse range of open spaces across Australia and New Zealand where there is a risk that

### RECOMMENDED WAYS TO CONTROL RISK

- As with all workplace hazards, elimination is the most effective way to protect workers from harm. A FOD (**Foreign Object Debris**) Walk through an area before it is mowed is an effective way to identify and remove any items which may become entangled in or thrown by the mower if they are run over.
- FOD walks are not a 100% reliable control, and operators must remain alert for any debris or items they observe during mowing operations. If an object is observed, then the SOP must be followed to safely bring the mower to a stop to enable the operator to dismount and remove the object before continuing to mow.
- Removal of debris from a deck must only occur on flat ground, and equipment secured/made safe. Never on a truck deck or trailer.
- Manual tasks such as tilting a mowing deck may require a second person to assist. Always wait for help before attempting a lift that is beyond your capacity.
- Use wheel chocks to prevent the machine from any unintentional movement while debris is removed. Chocks or cribbing can also be used to support the weight of the mower deck and prevent unintentional falls to ground level which could cause injuries or damage.
- Turn off the engine and allow all moving parts to come to a complete stop before attempting removal of debris. Remove the key to prevent unintentional restarting.

For more information regarding this incident please contact:

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**Report all incidents and near misses**

Please display on Safety Noticeboards and raise this matter at the next Toolbox Talk or Safety Meeting.