

Tips to Reduce Incidence of Damages From Debris Thrown By Landscaping and Grounds-Keeping Equipment On University Campuses Within IHL

The most common *general liability* claim against our Universities results from debris being thrown by various types of lawn care equipment. Damage is usually to automobiles in the vicinity and usually involves broken glass. The average claim is for \$371.00 in damages.

Following are strategies used by Landscaping and Grounds-Keeping departments at Universities within the MS IHL system. Each University is employing some if not all of these practices. This list is generated from input from the Universities in an effort to share ideas. Additions to the list will be ongoing as new ideas are brought forth.

1. Conduct first "hard edging" during spring break, when fewer vehicles and people are on campus.
2. Make a point of inspecting area and removing any potential projectiles prior to mowing.
3. Schedule work around parking lots when lots are least likely to be fully occupied.
4. Recognize that some areas may be better suited to a natural look and may not need to be mowed at all. Typically, these are rough areas containing recurring amounts of debris and poorly growing grass. Some areas may be better suited to ground covers, other vegetation or mulches rather than lawn.
5. Design borders to minimize need for edging or weed-eating. Use arcing lines rather than straight angles. This will also use less time to complete cycle.
6. Incorporate obstacles such as signs and utilities *within* flower beds or other non-mowed areas to reduce need for string trimming.
7. Control weeds with herbicide to reduce mowing and trimming frequency.
8. Incorporate the use of growth inhibitors in high traffic areas to reduce exposure to mowing operations.
9. Favor mulching mowers near areas where potential for damage exists.
10. Keep guards on all equipment in proper position and repair or replace if damaged.
11. Point discharge side of equipment away from identified targets.
12. Pause operations when high volumes of foot or vehicle traffic are present, such as time between classes.
13. Pause operations when any person or vehicle enters discharge zone.
14. Keep accurate records of activities including: who, what, when & where.