VCSU SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES:
Grounds Maintenance Equipment

Grounds maintenance equipment plays an important role in the upkeep of the campus grounds. By following safe operating procedures for all equipment involved, it can help reduce the risk of a work-related injury.

Procedure
Please remember to report all incidents or damage of state property to the Safety Office within 24 hours of the incident!

For all Grounds Maintenance Equipment, remember the following information:

- **Operation and Maintenance**
  - Prior to use, inspect the entire unit for worn, loose or damaged parts.
  - Do not use the unit unless it is in proper working condition.
  - Keep the handles dry and free of oil and dirt.
  - Never start or run the engine inside a closed room or building.
  - Stop the engine while repairing, refueling, inspecting and transporting.
  - Only use dealer authorized accessories and attachments.
  - Drain the fuel tank for long term storage.
  - When unit is stored or left unattended, disconnect the spark plug.
  - Clean outer surface after use.
  - Store in designated area.
  - Do not alter equipment from the manufacturer's intended use.

- **General Safety**
  - Student Employee operation will be at the discretion of the supervisor based on the knowledge and experience of the individual.
  - Keep pets and children away from the work area.
  - Do not operate the equipment if you are fatigued, ill or under the influence of drugs, alcohol or medications.
  - Eliminate all sources of spark, open flames, or work that could cause spark in the areas where fuel is mixed, poured or stored. DO NOT SMOKE!

- **Fueling**
  - Mix, pour and store fuel in an approved, marked container.
  - Store fuel in a well-ventilated area.
  - Select bare ground for refueling (concrete recommended).
  - Wipe up all spills before starting the engine.
  - Before starting the engine, move at least 10 feet away from the fueling site.

**Edge Trimmer**

- Supervisors will identify authorized operators and supply training.
- Person Protective Equipment (PPE) is MANDATORY and includes the following:
  - Boots or safety shoes
  - Hearing protection
  - Long pants
  - Safety goggles
  - Gloves
- Operation and Maintenance
  - Make sure the blade guard is properly attached and in place.
  - Be aware of burn hazards (do not touch the muffler tail pipe during or immediately after use.
  - When leaving an area where there is a slope, ensure the unit is resting on its handlebars to prevent it from moving.
**Grass/Brush Trimmer**

- Supervisors will identify authorized operators and supply training.
- Person Protective Equipment (PPE) is MANDATORY and includes the following:
  - Boots or safety shoes
  - Hearing protection
  - Long pants
  - Safety goggles
  - Gloves
- Operation and Maintenance
  - Do not transfer the trimmer to another person while the machine is running.
  - Prior to starting the job, clear the area of objects that may be thrown.
  - Start trimmer and use on flat, level ground.
  - Hold trimmer firmly with both hands during operation.
  - Walk behind trimmer; trim from left to right in a sweeping motion.
  - Do not reach to make a cut.
  - Stop engine before removing debris from the cutting head.
  - Do not use trimmer without the proper guard/shield.
  - Do not edge with the metal blade.
  - To avoid kick-out, use the proper blade for the job.

**Hedge Clipper**

- Supervisors will identify authorized operators and supply training.
- Person Protective Equipment (PPE) is MANDATORY and includes the following:
  - Boots or safety shoes
  - Hearing protection
  - Long pants
  - Safety goggles
  - Gloves
- Operation and Maintenance
  - Do not transfer clipper to another person while the machine is running.
  - Safety shield and handle must be in good condition and fastened in place.
  - Blades must be aligned and move freely.
  - Maintain stable footing.
  - Work slowly, plan your moves.
  - Move clipper in a sweeping motion away from your body.
  - Do not over extend to make a cut.
  - If blade jams, stop the engine before removing the obstruction.
  - Use gloves when handling the blades.
  - Do not touch blades to the ground, this may cause debris to be thrown, as well as cause damage to the blades.
  - Prior to work, clear the area of any objects that may be thrown.
  - Clean the outer surface of hedge clipper after each use.

**Rotary Tiller**

- Supervisors will identify authorized operators and supply training.
- Person Protective Equipment (PPE) is MANDATORY and includes the following:
  - Boots or safety shoes
  - Hearing protection
  - Long pants
  - Safety goggles
  - Gloves
- Operation and Maintenance
  - Do not transfer machine to another person while the engine is running.
Guards and shields must be in place.
Start the engine and tines only when you are ready to start tilling.
Disengage clutch before starting the engine.
Give complete and undivided attention to the task at hand.
Keep hands, feet and clothing clear of the power driven parts.
Stop the engine whenever you leave the tiller unattended.
Stop rotary tiller engine in an emergency.
Disengage tine rotation and stop engine before cleaning, removing debris or making adjustments.

Walking Mowers

- Supervisors will identify authorized operators and supply training.
- Person Protective Equipment (PPE) is MANDATORY and includes the following:
  - Boots or safety shoes
  - Hearing protection
  - Long pants
  - Safety goggles
  - Gloves
- Inspection
  - Ensure cooling fans are clear of grass and debris.
  - Grass catcher must be in good condition, in place and working properly.
- Protection
  - Prior to mowing, clear the area of all objects that may be thrown.
  - Discharge clippings away from people.
  - Do not lift or block grass catcher door open when the blade is engaged.
- Operation and Maintenance
  - Do not use mower for anything other than the manufacturer’s intent.
  - Mow across slopes and use caution when changing directions.
  - Release handles lever to stop the engine and blade during shutdown and emergency situations.
  - If an object is hit, stop mower and fix the damage before continuing.
  - Never leave mower unattended when the engine is running.
  - Stay away from the mower deck and discharge chute when the blade is turning.
  - Stop mower blade:
    - When moving between jobs.
    - Before crossing gravel, road, path or sidewalk.
    - Before opening grass catcher door.

Riding Mowers

- Supervisors will identify authorized operators and supply training.
- Person Protective Equipment (PPE) is MANDATORY and includes the following:
  - Boots or safety shoes
  - Hearing protection
  - Long pants
  - Safety goggles
  - Gloves
- Inspection
  - Engine must be shut off when inspecting the equipment!
  - Inspect hydraulic line connectors and hoses for leaks before applying pressure to the system.
    DO NOT USE HANDS TO CHECK FOR LEAKS.
- Operation
  - Maximum seating capacity is one person.
  - Before mowing, clear the area of all objects that may be thrown.
  - Discharge clippings away from people.
- Keep all shields and safety devices in place. Grass deflectors must be installed in the lowest position on side discharge units.
- Before staring the machine:
  - Engage the parking brake.
  - Ensure the traction pedal is released, transmission is neutral and PTO is off.
  - After the engine has started, release the parking brake and take foot off traction pedal.
  - Machine must not move- if it does, an adjustment must be made to the neutral return mechanism.
- Keep hands, feet and clothing away from the mower deck while the blade is turning.
- Disengage PTO when:
  - Moving between jobs.
  - Before crossing gravel, road, path or sidewalk.
  - Making adjustments.
- Wear gloves when servicing the blade.
- Be careful when changing directions on a slope.
- If you hit an object, stop the mower and fix damage before continuing the job.
- Slow down and be aware of surroundings at all times.
- To shut down the machine:
  - Release the traction pedal and place the transmission into neutral.
  - Set the parking brake and disengage the PTO.
  - Lower the cutting unit of attached implements to the ground.
  - Wait for all movement to stop before getting off the machine.