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# 12SB, 14PB, 14SB, and 14SE 21-Inch Walk-Behind Rotary Mowers

(Serial No. GXXXXXX175,001— )



## OPERATOR'S MANUAL



John Deere Horicon Works

OMM95322 Issue H0

(Mark old manual OMM79671, Issue L9 for  
machines up to Serial No. 174,999.)

LITHO IN U.S.A.

# Introduction

THANK YOU for purchasing a John Deere product.

READ THIS MANUAL carefully to learn how to operate and service your mower correctly. Failure to do so could result in personal injury or equipment damage.

THIS MANUAL SHOULD BE CONSIDERED a permanent part of your mower and should remain with the mower when you sell it.

MEASUREMENTS in this manual are U.S. customary units and their metric equivalents.

RIGHT AND LEFT sides are determined by facing in the direction of forward travel.

WRITE IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS in the Specifications section. Accurately record all the numbers to help trace the mower if it is stolen. Your dealer also needs these numbers when you order parts. File numbers in a safe place.

WARRANTY is provided as part of John Deere's support program for customers who operate and maintain their equipment as described in this manual. The warranty OPBV,A is explained on the warranty certificate which you should have received from your dealer.

This warranty provides you the assurance that John Deere will back its products where defects appear within the warranty period. In some circumstances, John Deere also provides field improvements, often without charge to the customer, even if the product is out of warranty. Should the equipment be abused, or modified to change its performance beyond the original factory specifications, the warranty will become void and field improvements may be denied. Setting fuel delivery above specifications or otherwise overpowering machines will result in such action.



Model 14SB, 4-Cycle Engine

MR1525  
-JUN-01SEP98



Meeting  
**Customer**  
Needs

## Product Services Information

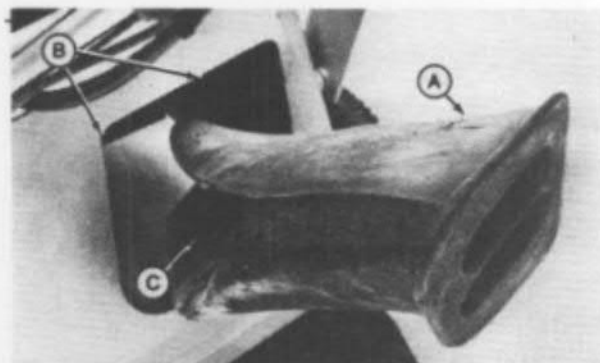
### OPERATOR'S MANUAL INSERT

0mm95322  
ISSUE H0

**Your Tricycler Mower has a special blade for mulching.  
Follow instructions below to install the mulch plug.**

**CAUTION:** Do not operate the mower unless the grass bag, chute, or mulcher attachment is in place.

1. Lift and hold the door up.
2. Install the mulch plug (A) in the discharge opening (B) with area (C) facing as shown.



M75530

3. Push the plug (A) into the opening. At the same time turn the plug counterclockwise.



M75531

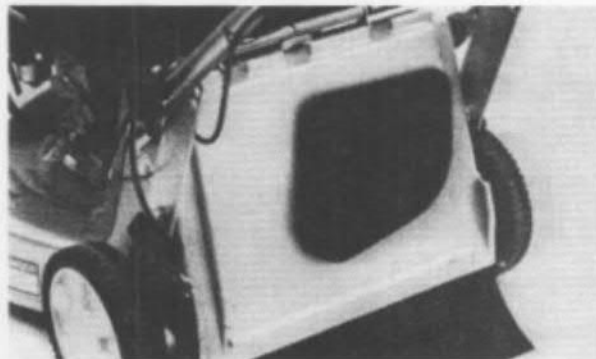
4. Push and turn the plug until it is seated as shown.

**CAUTION:** Do not operate the mower unless the door is in place and working properly.

5. Lower the door to hold the plug in place.

To remove the plug:

- Lift and hold the door up.
- Pull and turn the plug clockwise.
- Lower the door.



M75532

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*All information, illustrations and specifications in this manual are based on the latest information available at the time of publication. The right is reserved to make changes at any time without notice.*

OMM95322 HO-19-23AUG90

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# Safety

## RECOGNIZE SAFETY INFORMATION

This is the safety-alert symbol. When you see this symbol on your mower or in this manual, be alert to the potential for personal injury.

Follow recommended precautions and safe operating practices.



MX,SABV,A1 -19-24AUG90

TS1369 -UN-07DEC98

## UNDERSTAND SIGNAL WORDS

A signal word—DANGER, WARNING, or CAUTION—is used with the safety-alert symbol. DANGER identifies the most serious hazards.

DANGER or WARNING safety signs are located near specific hazards. General precautions are listed on CAUTION safety signs. CAUTION also calls attention to safety messages in this manual.

**▲ DANGER**

**▲ WARNING**

**▲ CAUTION**

DX,SIGNAL -19-04JUN90

TS187 -19-30SEP98

## FOLLOW SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

Carefully read all safety messages in this manual and on your mower safety signs. Keep safety signs in good condition. Replace missing or damaged safety signs.

Be sure new and repair parts have current safety signs. Replacement safety signs are available from your John Deere dealer.

Learn how to operate the mower and how to use controls properly. Do not let anyone operate the mower without instruction.

Keep your mower in proper working condition. Unauthorized modifications to the mower may impair the function and/or safety and affect mower life.

If you do not understand any part of this manual and need help, contact your John Deere dealer.



M73113 -UN-06DEC98



MX,SABV,A2 -19-24AUG90



### OPEI CERTIFICATION

This OPEI Label on your mower indicates that this model has been certified by an independent laboratory for compliance with American National Standard B-71.1-1986, "Safety Specifications" for Power Lawn Mowers, Lawn and Garden Tractors, and Lawn Tractors.



DX,CERT1 -19-04JUN90

TS2988 -19-07OCT88

### INSPECT MOWER REGULARLY

Check hardware often. Keep it tight.

Clean engine often, especially cooling fins.

Discharge chute or rear bag must be in good condition, and in place.

Door (on top of bag) must be working properly and in place.



MX,SABV,A -19-24AUG90

M41506 -JUN-06SEP88

### PROTECT FROM THROWN OBJECTS

Before you mow, clear mowing area of objects that might be thrown.

Discharge clippings away from people.

Discharge chute or grass bag must be in place.

Do not lift or block door open when blade is ENGAGED.



MX,SABV,C -19-24AUG90

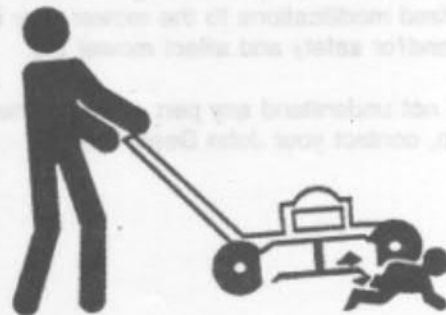
M41423 -JUN-30AUG88

### PROTECT PEOPLE AND PETS

Keep people and pets out of mowing area.

Do not let children or untrained persons operate mower.

Do not leave mower unattended.



MX,SABV,B -19-24AUG90

M41473 -JUN-01SEP88



## OPERATE MOWER SAFELY

Do not run engine indoors unless there is good ventilation.

Be sure of footing. Walk—do not run.

Do not use mower for anything other than its original design.

Mow across face of slopes—not up and down.

Be especially careful when you change direction on slope.

Avoid sudden starts and stops.

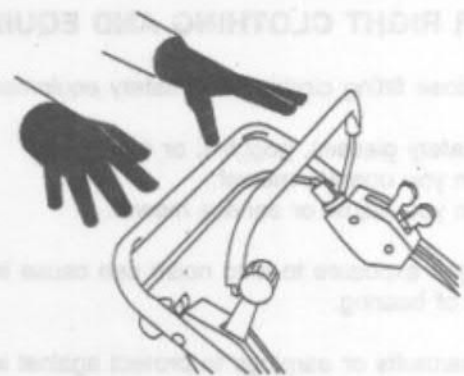
Do not leave mower on slope. Put mower on level surface.

MX,SABV,C1 -19-24AUG90

## EMERGENCY STOP

Release handle and levers:

- Mower will stop.
- Blade will stop.
- Engine will NOT stop.



MX,SABV,D -19-24AUG90

MB1445 -JUN-01SEP98

## HANDLE FUEL SAFELY—AVOID FIRES

Handle fuel with care: it is highly flammable.

Do not refuel the mower:

- While you smoke.
- When mower is near an open flame or sparks.
- When engine is running. STOP ENGINE.

Fill fuel tank outdoors.

Help prevent fires:

- Clean clippings, grease, oil, and dirt from mower.
- Clean up spilled fuel immediately.

Do not store mower with fuel in tank in a building where fumes may reach an open flame or spark.



MX,SABV,D1 -19-24AUG90

M73115 -JUN-09MAR90

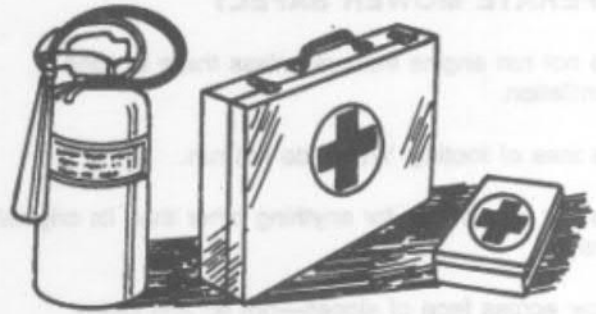


## PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES

Be prepared if a fire starts.

Keep a first aid kit and fire extinguisher handy.

Keep emergency numbers for doctors, ambulance service, hospital, and fire department near your telephone.



DX,FIRE2 -19-04JUN90

UN-23AUG88  
TS291

## WEAR RIGHT CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

Wear close fitting clothing and safety equipment.

Wear safety glasses, goggles, or eye shield:

- When you operate mower.
- When you adjust or service mower.

Prolonged exposure to loud noise can cause impairment or loss of hearing.

Wear earmuffs or earplugs to protect against loud noise.

Operating equipment safely requires the full attention of the operator. Do not wear radio or music headphones while you operate the mower.



MX,SABV,E -19-24AUG90

UN-23AUG88  
TS206

## AVOID INJURY FROM MOVING PARTS

Keep hands, feet, and clothing away from mower deck and discharge chute when blade is turning.

Do not make adjustments while engine is running, unless procedure is approved. If adjustments are to be made, STOP ENGINE.

Stop mower blade:

- Before you move between jobs.
- Before you cross gravel road, path, or sidewalk.
- When you are not mowing.

Stop engine before you lift door.



MX,SABV,F -19-24AUG90

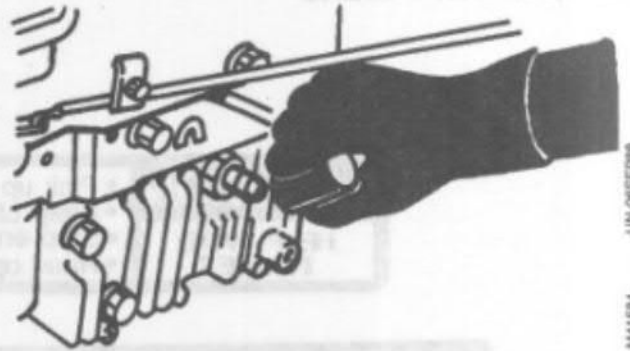
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M1147



## SERVICE MOWER SAFELY

Before you service under deck:

- Put mower on level surface
- Stop engine. Let it cool.
- Disconnect spark plug wire.



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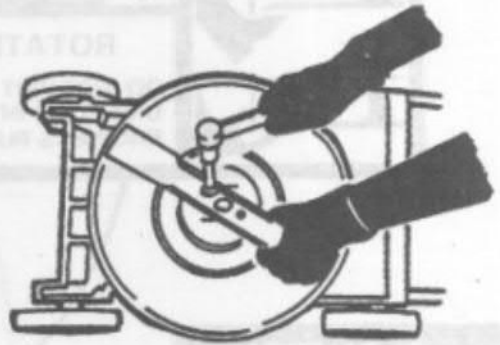
MX.SABV.G -19-24AUG90

Wear gloves when you service blade.

Keep parts in good condition, fastened in place.

Replace worn or damaged parts immediately.

If you hit an object, stop mower. Fix damage before you operate.



M61532 -JUN-01SEP98

MX.SABV.H -19-24AUG90





# READ SAFETY SIGNS

SERVICE MOWER SAFELY

Before you service mower deck  
— Shut engine on level surface  
— Shut engine. Let it cool.  
— Disconnect spark plug wire.

**CAUTION**  
HELP AVOID INJURIES

- Pick up objects that blade may hit and throw
- Keep children and bystanders far away
- Stop engine before adjusting cutting height
- Read operator's manual



**DANGER**  
ROTATING BLADE  
DO NOT PUT HANDS OR FEET UNDER OR INTO MOWER WHEN ENGINE IS RUNNING

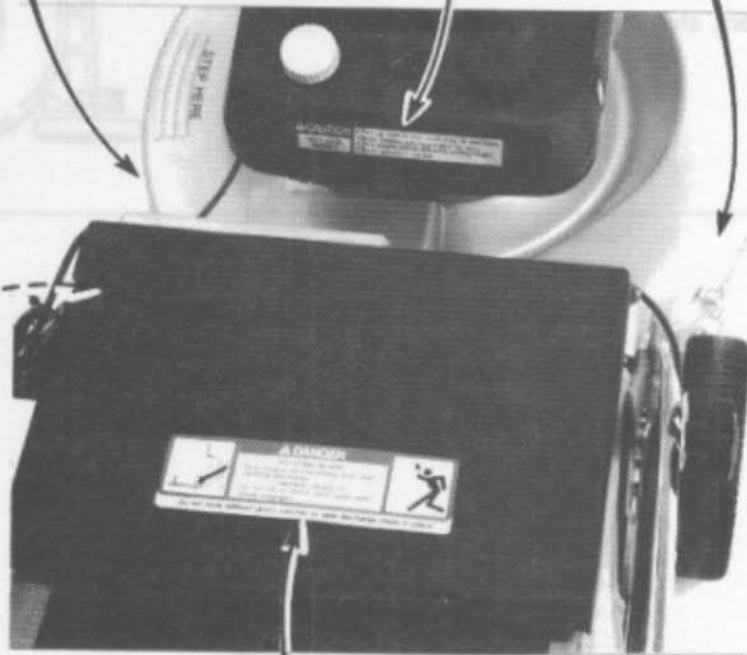

**DANGER**  
KEEP HANDS and FEET AWAY




CUTTING BLADES

**CAUTION**

- BAG IS SUBJECT TO WEAR AND DETERIORATION
- CHECK BAG FREQUENTLY, REPLACE WHEN NECESSARY
- USE JOHN DEERE BAG OR EQUIVALENT TO COMPLY WITH SAFETY SPECIFICATIONS

**DANGER**  
ROTATING BLADE  
Stop engine before lifting door and clearing discharge  
THROWN OBJECTS  
Do not lift or block door open with blade engaged



Do not mow without grass catcher or side discharge chute in place

-19-20JUN09

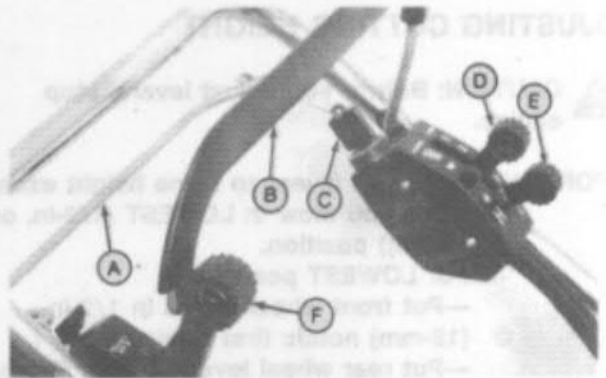
M82531

MX,SABV,I -19-24AUG90

# Controls

## HANDLE CONTROLS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A—Traction Clutch Lever (Self-Propelled Models Only) | D—Gear Shift Lever (All Models Except 12PB and 14PB) |
| B—Blade Lockout/Stop Lever (All Models)              | E—Throttle Lever (All Models)                        |
| C—Key (Model 14SE only)                              | F—Blade Engagement Lever (All Models)                |

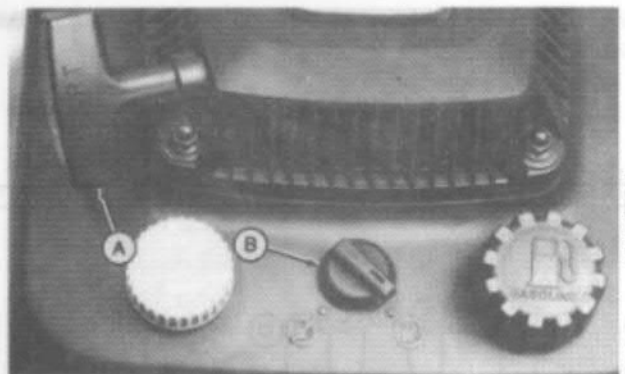


MX,CTBV,A -19-24AUG90

M61446 -JUN-01SEP98

## 4-CYCLE ENGINE CONTROLS

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| A—Starter Handle | B—Fuel Shutoff Knob |
|------------------|---------------------|

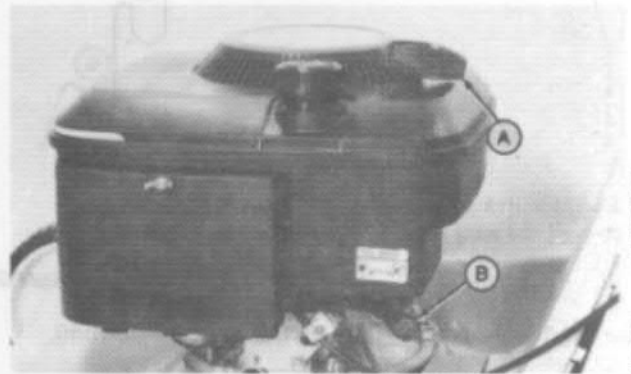


MX,CTBV,B -19-24AUG90

M61447 -JUN-01SEP98

## 2-CYCLE ENGINE CONTROLS

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| A—Starter Handle | B—Fuel Shutoff Knob |
|------------------|---------------------|

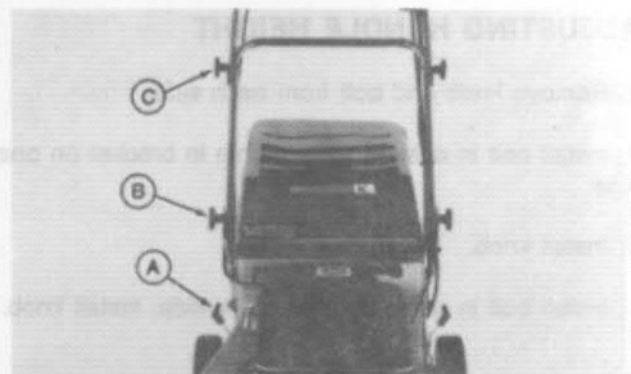


MX,CTBV,C -19-24AUG90

M61478 -JUN-01SEP98

## MOWER CONTROLS

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| A—Cutting Height Lever | C—Fold-Handle Knob |
| B—Handle Height Knob   |                    |



MX,CTBV,D -19-24AUG90

M61448 -JUN-06OCT88

# Operation

## ADJUSTING CUTTING HEIGHT

**CAUTION:** Before you adjust levers, stop engine.

**IMPORTANT:** Adjust all levers to same height except when you mow in **LOWEST** (1/2-in. or 13-mm) position.

For **LOWEST** position:

- Put front wheel levers in 1/2-in. (13-mm) notch: first rear notch.
- Put rear wheel levers in 1-in. (25-mm) notch: second rear notch.



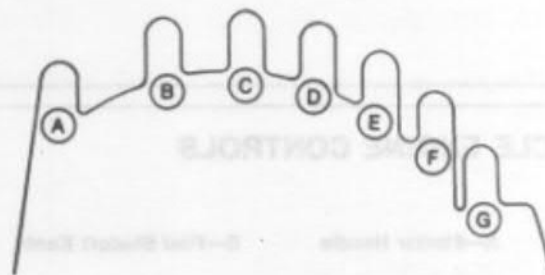
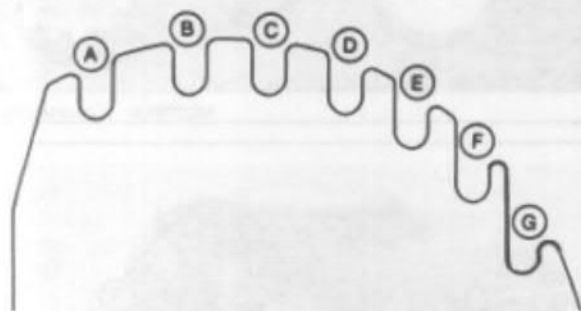
MR1449 -JUN-01SEP98

Move each wheel lever to desired position. See drawing below.

4-CYCLE ENGINE CONTROLS

2-4-1/2 Wheel Height Knob

MX,OPBV,A -19-24AUG90



M73111 -JUN-21NOV89

A—1/2 in. (13 mm)  
B—1 in. (25 mm)

C—1-1/2 in. (38 mm)  
D—2 in. (50 mm)

E—2-1/2 in. (64 mm)  
F—3 in. (75 mm)

G—3-1/2 in. (90 mm)

*Right Side of Mower*

Cutting height range: 1/2—3-1/2 in. (13—90 mm).

To change cutting height 1/2 in. (13 mm), move lever one notch.

MX,OPBV,A1 -19-24AUG90

## ADJUSTING HANDLE HEIGHT

1. Remove knob and bolt from each side.
2. Install bolt in desired square hole in bracket on one side.
3. Install knob.
4. Install bolt in same hole on other side. Install knob.



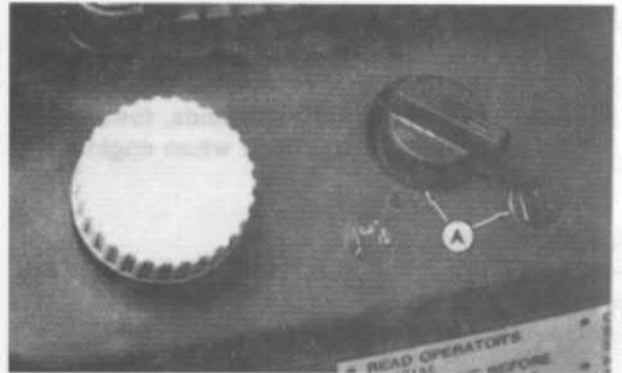
M73228 -JUN-24AUG90

MX,OPBV,B -19-24AUG90

### ELECTRIC STARTING—MODEL 14SE ONLY

**⚠ CAUTION:** Wear close-fitting clothing and safety equipment. Keep hands, feet, and clothing away from deck when engine is running.

**IMPORTANT:** Use only clean, fresh regular or unleaded gasoline. Be sure choke and throttle controls are in good condition and adjusted correctly.



M61451 -JUN-01SEP98

1. Open fuel shutoff valve (A).

COLD ENGINE: Move throttle lever to CHOKE position.  
WARM ENGINE: Move throttle lever to FAST position.

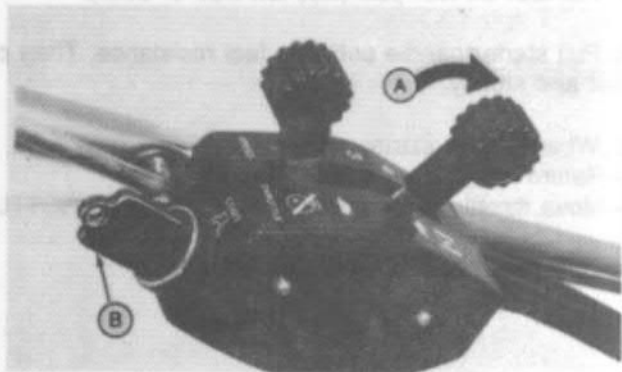
MX,OPBV,C -19-24AUG90

2. COLD ENGINE: Move throttle lever (A) to CHOKE position.

WARM ENGINE: Move throttle lever to FAST position.

*NOTE: If battery is low, start engine with recoil starter. See MANUAL STARTING in this section.*

3. Turn key (B) to START position:
  - Crank engine 5 seconds.
  - If engine does not start, wait 10 seconds.
  - Crank engine again 5 seconds.
  - Repeat this procedure if necessary.



M61452 -JUN-01SEP98

4. Release key when engine starts.

*NOTE: Key will not stop engine. To stop engine, pull throttle all the way to rear.*

5. Move throttle lever slowly down to HALF-THROTTLE position after engine starts.

MX,OPBV,D -19-24AUG90

## MANUAL STARTING

**CAUTION:** Wear close-fitting clothing and safety equipment. Keep hands, feet, and clothing away from deck when engine is running.

1. Open fuel shutoff valve:  
—4-Cycle engine: See ELECTRIC STARTING in this section.  
—2-Cycle engine: Shown at right.



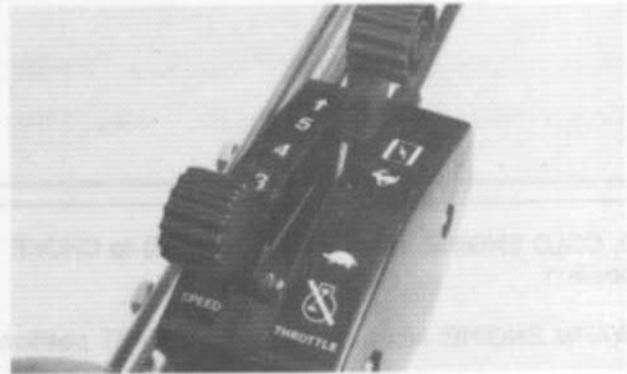
MX,OPBV,E -19-24AUG90

M61478 -JUN-01SEP88

2. COLD ENGINE: Move throttle lever to CHOKE position as shown.

WARM ENGINE: Move throttle lever to FAST position (rabbit).

3. Put foot on foot pad (top, left side of deck).
4. Pull starter handle until you feel resistance. Then pull fast and steady.
5. When engine starts:  
—Return rope slowly.  
—Move throttle lever slowly down to HALF-THROTTLE.

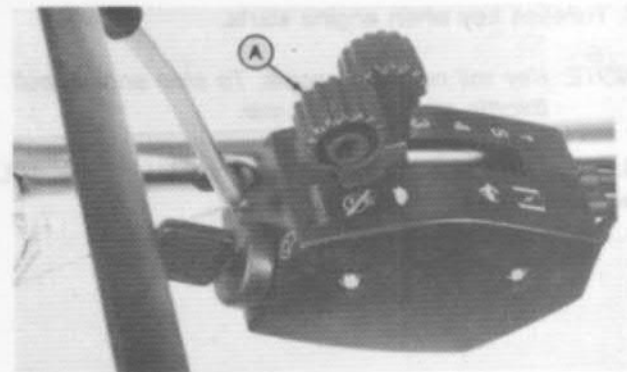


MX,OPBV,F -19-24AUG90

M61680 -JUN-01SEP88

## STOPPING ENGINE

To stop engine, pull throttle lever (A) to STOP position.



MX,OPBV,F1 -19-24AUG90

M61556 -JUN-07DEC88



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### BLADE OPERATION

**CAUTION:** Keep hands, feet and clothing away from blade when engine is running. If blade does not stop within 3 seconds after you release lever, see your John Deere dealer.

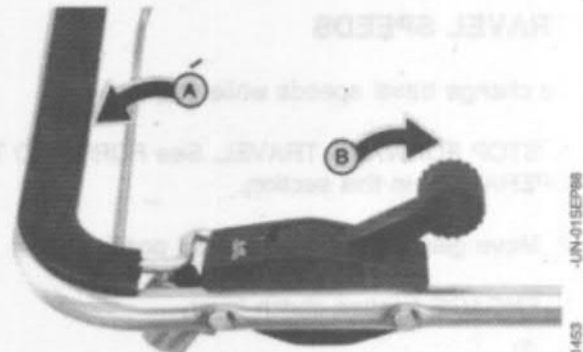
Do not engage blade in heavy grass or engine may stop.

To ENGAGE blade:

- Pull and hold lever (A) against handle.
- Push lever (B) quickly until it latches.

To DISENGAGE blade: Release lever (A).

**CAUTION:** Do not tape lever (A) to handle. If lever (B) does not latch, do not tape it or hold it in latch position. See your John Deere dealer.



M61453 -JN-01SEP88

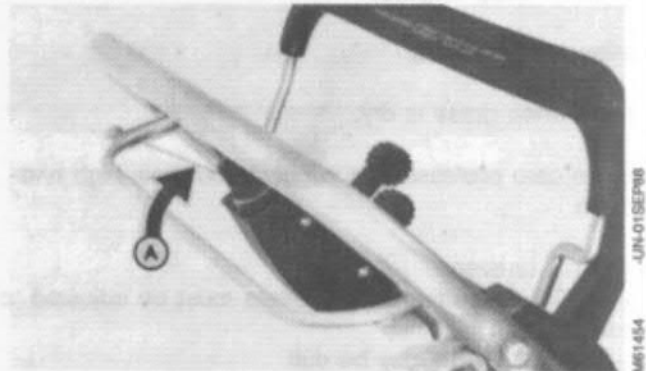
### FORWARD TRAVEL OPERATION—SELF-PROPELLED MODELS

TO TRAVEL FORWARD: Pull lever (A) to handle and hold.

TO STOP FORWARD TRAVEL: Release lever.

Release lever before you turn.

**NOTE:** Rear wheels will make a clicking noise when you push mower forward. This means drivetrain is operating correctly.



M61454 -JN-01SEP88

MX,OPBV,H -19-24AUG90

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