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Mother to file lawsuit over girl's partially severed foot

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STAMFORD — The mother of a 7-year-old girl whose left foot was partially severed in a lawnmower accident in June 2003 will file a lawsuit this week in Stamford Superior Court seeking unspecified damages from the couple on whose lawn the accident occurred.

Celia Hall alleges in the suit that Norwalk residents Christine Chencharick and live-in boyfriend Emil Micik were negligent and reckless in allowing children to operate a ride-on lawnmower near; their property.

Hall's daughter was injured, when she was standing behind a 17.5-horsepower lawnmower operated by Chencharick's 10-year-old daughter. According to reports the 10-year-old girl put the lawnmower in reverse and

backed into the young girl.

The lower portion of the victim's left foot was severed and ejected from the lawnmower's grass chute. According to court documents, Chencharick told police she had allowed her daughter and two friends to operate the lawnmower in front of her home.

The incident occurred on the property of Allen Chencharick, the 10-year-old girl's father, who is also named as a defendant in the lawsuit because he owned the lawnmower and the property. Micik had reportedly moved the lawnmower there to mow the lawn.

Police arrested Christine Chencharick in July 2003 on risk of injury to a minor because she and Micik were present when the accident occurred. She was granted accelerated rehabilitation. and

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ordered to perform 100 hours of community service in her criminal case last January in Norwalk Superior Court.

Christine Chencharick said through her lawyer last January that she believed the lawnmower's safety devices should have kicked in prior to the accident.

A police check of the lawnmower's owner's manual indicated that bystanders should be 75 feet from the lawnmower

and advised no children under 14 to operate the lawnmower.

Stamford attorney Paul Slager, who is representing Hall in the civil matter, said the situation leading to the suit was "tragic and traumatic," adding that the case centers around the premise that adults should be accountable when their bad decisions place children at risk.

"This is really a terrible situation" Slager said in a written statement.

"This is a young girl, who because of the poor judgment of adults, lost part of her leg and suffered an incredible amount of trauma."

The victim's mother is seeking damages to "try to provide the injured girl with the resources she needs to get the care and therapy she needs," Slager said,

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