
AG SAFETY S.T.A.T. - *SAFE TACTICS FOR AG TODAY*

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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR – Safety during the Holidays

Dee Jepsen - State Agricultural Safety and Health Leader

December is a month for many holiday traditions. It is a time to give thanks and gather with friends, family, and community members. However this month is also a time to be mindful of safety. Safety topics can range from food safety, fire safety, road safety and personal safety (for home and shopping).

Safety items can also make great gifts for people of all ages. If bicycles, scooters, dirt bikes, ATV's, or ponies are on the wish list – then please remember to add a helmet to the total package. College students and new homeowners can benefit from fire protection systems like smoke / carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers. The TV ads don't show the car safety kit when they advertise big ticket vehicles with a big red bow on top of them – but even used car drivers could use this popular road safety gift.

Adding safety to the gift-giving season is a way to show you care. Have a safe and fun holiday season.

A SECOND ON SAFETY

Snow blindness is also called sunburn of the eyes that occurs during winter months. Symptoms occur 8-10 hours after time outdoors. Eyes feel dry or irritated as if full of sand. Eyes may be red and tear excessively, and eyelids may swell and be painful to blink. You can prevent snow blindness by wearing sunglasses while driving or participating in winter recreation activities.

RECREATIONAL SAFETY – AVOID BEING ON THIN ICE

Kathy Mann – Agricultural Safety and Health Program Coordinator

As the weather continues to get colder, many Ohioans look forward to some wintertime recreation such as ice fishing, sledding, snow mobile riding, ice-skating, and skiing. With these activities come some safety precautions, especially when ice is involved. There are many things, other than temperature, that affects ice conditions on ponds, lakes, and rivers. The condition, strength, and stability of ice can change dramatically in a short amount of time depending on temperature, precipitation, wind, and the amount of sunshine. The strength and thickness of the ice should be known before any activities take place upon it. There are no hard and fast rules to assure your safety on the ice, but you can learn what to look for and be prepared for your winter activity. The first step for being prepared is to plan ahead. Key items that should be part of planning any winter activity on the ice include:

Your physical condition – Can you keep up with the physical demands of the weather conditions and the amount of energy needed for winter activities?

Properly dress for the conditions – Layered clothing, hat, gloves, and boots / proper footwear

Equipment to take with you – Cell phone, hand and foot warmers, blanket, extra clothes, rope, flotation device, and ice jaws / picks.

In addition to your planning, knowing what to do when you get on the ice is vitally important. Safety tips to remember for ice include:

- Understand the color and clarity of ice can tell it's condition. Clear ice is best. Avoid white, gray, dark, or opaque ice
- Never be on ice less than 4 inches (10 cm)
- Be aware of wet cracks and slushy areas, as well as water edges that are normally weaker.
- Avoid crossing river ice. Ice formed from moving water intensifies changes in ice condition and is typically 15% weaker than pond ice.
- Check the quality of the ice every time you go on it. Ice can change from day to day or even hour to hour under the right conditions.
- Wear a personal flotation device (PFD) for warmth and safety
- Dress warmly in layers especially around head, neck, chest, and sides. Good gloves keep hands nimble.
- Never go out on ice alone. Have someone within sight of you at all times.
- Don't take vehicles onto ice as their weight alone can cause problems.

By following these safety procedures you can bundle up, be safe, and enjoy winter activities in Ohio's great outdoors.

For more information check out: <http://ohioline.osu.edu/aex-fact/pdf/0392.pdf>

MACHINERY MAINTENANCE – Portable Generator Safety

Dewey Mann – Safety Research Associate

Power outages are often a part of winter in Ohio, especially following ice storms or wet, heavy snowfall events. If you lose power at your home or farm, how well is your family prepared? The Department of Homeland Security recommends having enough supplies for 72 hours (3 days). <http://www.dhs.gov/how-do-i/prepare-my-family-disaster>

Your emergency preparedness kit would likely include food and water, but what about a portable backup generator for your home, shop, or livestock barns? If your plan includes a portable generator, here are some safety tips to keep in mind during operation.

Use an Isolating Transfer Switch

To avoid running extension cords directly to power appliances, homeowners often choose to directly connect a generator to a service entrance panel (breaker box) to power devices that are hard wired, such as a furnace blower. A double pole, double throw switch installed between the generator and the breaker box will avoid a hazard known as “back feeding”. Back feeding into power lines from a generator could produce energized power lines, creating a dangerous situation for yourself or linemen working to restore power.

Check your Ground – Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI)

A properly functioning GFCI will protect you from electrical shock. The same technology used to protect your family in high moisture areas (bathrooms, kitchen, garage, etc.), can provide protection when operating your portable generator.

Create a Safe Environment

In addition to producing electricity, generators also produce carbon monoxide (CO). CO is a colorless, odorless gas produced by internal combustion engines. Gasoline engines are a primary culprit, and can produce as much CO as hundreds of cars. CO is lighter than air and tends to rise.

To create a safe environment when using a portable generator, consider following these steps:

- Operate generators OUTDOORS in a well-ventilated area, away from all doors, windows and air inlets to animal buildings
- Install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors in areas where people or animals will be staying
- Know the signs of CO poisoning; the symptoms of exposure are similar to having the flu

Being without electricity can be frustrating, but in the winter, being without electricity can be deadly. If a portable generator is part of your winter preparedness plan, read the operator's manual and know how to use this device for your family and livestock in a safe manner.

For a flier on portable generator safety, visit:

http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/focus/feb_2012_generators.pdf

INJURY PREVENTION – Reducing Slips, Trips, and Falls in Winter Working Conditions

Kent McGuire – Ohio AgrAbility Program Coordinator

Several types of walking and working surfaces are on farms and farmers may encounter some or even all of them throughout the workday. Farmers have an increased risk of injury from a trip, slip, or fall because of the variety of surfaces they encounter on a regular basis. Areas that have a greater risk for these types of injuries include: sloped or uneven terrain, feed lots, wash down areas, and farm equipment steps, ladders or platforms. Nearly all slips or falls have one or more of these factors as it's root cause: 1) substandard walking surfaces; 2) surface contaminants; 3) footwear; and 4) walking style of the person. Proper housekeeping and lighting of working and walking surfaces can prevent most slips, trips, and falls. Sometimes surface contaminants can be very difficult to recognize as a hazard and once the hazard is noticed, must be cleaned up to prevent any risk of injury. Wearing the proper footwear for current weather or worksite conditions is important in preventing the potential for injury, as well as reducing fatigue. Other suggestions for preventing slip, trip, and fall injuries include:

- Utilize handrails or grab bars in areas where there are stairs or changes in elevation.
- Use 3 points of contact when mounting or dismounting equipment (1 hand / 2 feet) or (2 hands / 1 foot).
- In wet or icy conditions, take smaller steps and try to ensure your torso stays balanced over your feet.
- Use slip resistant matting or provide textured surfaces in potentially wet areas.
- Maintain good housekeeping in livestock barns and work areas, by removing manure and keeping surfaces clean and dry.
- Repair uneven / warped flooring, protruding nails, splinters and loose boards, or cracks in concrete which can create an uneven walking surface.
- Remove obstructions from travel areas, such as extension cords, power cords, hoses, boxes, or tools.
- Stay alert to items projecting from buildings or equipment.
- Create smooth transitions from loose gravel to other surfaces.
- Minimize distractions to remain alert to hazards and avoid carrying bulky items that block your view.

For more information about the Ohio AgrAbility Program visit agrability.osu.edu or contact Kent McGuire, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at mcguire.225@osu.edu or 614-292-0588.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – Planning With Your Local Emergency Providers

Kent McGuire – OSU Ag Safety and Health

Emergency management starts with planning. Whether it's a structure fire, traumatic farm injury, or natural disaster being prepared and limiting damage takes work and planning. With the potential hazards on the farm, it is a good idea to involve your local fire department and emergency medical services provider. Ask if the local fire department could visit your farm to get familiar with the overall layout and general operation of the farm. This will give them the opportunity to identify any potential hazards during emergency response and provide feedback on emergency planning. Some suggestions may include:

- Identify access points to the farmstead and to specific barns, buildings and structures
- Locate electrical disconnects, water or gas shut – offs, and fuel storage areas
- Specify locations of livestock facilities and relocation areas should they need evacuated from buildings
- Identify confined space areas such as grain bins, silos or manure pits and hazards associated with each one.
- Indicate areas where chemicals, pesticides, paints, compressed gas cylinders or flammables are stored.
- Locate access points to water sources such as ponds, rivers or streams, in the event of a large structure fire.
- Determine any specialty equipment needed to access remote locations on the farm. Examples include: Tractor, 4x4 truck, ATV / UTV, or boat.
- Consider how emergency response could be affected by seasonal changes (spring, summer, fall, winter).

For more information about Emergency Management contact Kent McGuire, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at mcguire.225@osu.edu or 614-292-0588.

Ag Safety S.T.A.T. - Safe Tactics for Ag Today is an e-mail newsletter prepared by Dee Jepsen, Extension Agricultural Safety Specialist and team members from the State Safety Office, in the Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering at OSU. The primary goal of this monthly newsletter is to help you stay connected to everyday safety news and activities that may be used in your own newsletters or programs. If you have safety-related questions or program ideas that you would like to share, please contact Dr. Jepsen at jepsen.4@osu.edu
