
AG SAFETY S.T.A.T. – SAFE TACTICS FOR AG TODAY

Vol.1 No. 6 December 2008

THOUGHTS from the EDITOR - RURAL ROADWAY SAFETY

HOLIDAY SAFETY for EVERYONE

SAFETY SHOULD BE ON EVERY NEW RIDER'S MIND (AND HEAD)

NEW REQUIREMENTS for 4-H ATV PROJECTS

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TIP of the MONTH

ARTICLE of the MONTH: "FALL SHOULD BE A SEASON NOT AN EVENT – Ladder Safety at Home & Work"

THOUGHTS from the EDITOR - RURAL ROADWAY SAFETY

Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader

It's that time of year to "Go over the river and through the woods" and I'm sure you know the rest of that phrase. It's true; the holidays are a great time to visit friends and family members. And the fondest trips can be those made to the countryside. But a recent report from the Department of Transportation (DOT) shows rural road safety is a significant problem in the U.S. The statistics are startling:

- Half of the U.S. crash-related fatalities occur on two-lane rural roads
- Head-on crashes are more likely to happen on rural roads than in urban areas
- 91% of nighttime rural fatal crashes occur on dark roadways, where urban crashes are likely to have street lighting
- Passenger cars account for 61% of rural fatal crashes
- 67% of fatal rural crashes occur on straight roads
- 62% of all alcohol-related fatalities involving passenger vehicles occur on rural roads

It is also known that crash victims are five to seven times more likely to die if they cannot be treated in a hospital within 30 minutes. The time between a crash and hospital arrival averages 34 minutes in urban areas and 52 minutes in rural areas.

So what needs to be done to improve safety on our rural roads? The most common elements are paying attention to speed limits, be aware of changing road conditions and contours, and drive defensively looking out for other vehicles and wildlife. It is also necessary to reduce your distractions; these can include cell phones, conversations with other passengers, and loud stereos. Another common phenomenon of country drivers is "gawking." On urban highways people "rubberneck" to see a crash or traffic disruption. In the country, people "gawk" at field plots, landscaping, and barnyards.

So enjoy that trip to the country, but also be vigilant to arrive safely.

HOLIDAY SAFETY for EVERYONE

Every now and then I stumble across one of those web sites that pack EVERYTHING you need to know about safety into one fact sheet. Well, I just had to share one with you. The author is the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. So, for information about managing your holiday "haul," learning why not to stick your hand in the snow blower, or refraining from drinking while you decorate, click here:

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00367>

SAFETY SHOULD BE ON EVERY NEW RIDER'S MIND (AND HEAD)

'Tis the season for some great outdoor gifts. Santa has been known to deliver shiny new bicycles, in-line skates, scooters, ATVs, dirt bikes, snowmobiles, and ponies! Hopefully he won't forget the helmets!

Helmets also make great gifts for people who already have the outdoor "toys." Helmets aren't designed to last forever. If a helmet shows excessive wear, has a frayed chinstrap, or has been involved in a crash, then it's time for a new one. Helmets come in a variety of styles and sizes; so it may not be possible for everyone to share a helmet. Toddlers, teens, and adults should have a properly fitted helmet specific for their outdoor sport.

2009 4-H ATV PROJECT CHANGE CLARIFICATION

The publication 4-H 555 ATV Adventures Rider Handbook is discontinued from the Family Guide in 2009. However, youth in any county can still take the ATV project by enrolling in the group project 554GPM. And, even though this is designated as a group project, it is acceptable that even one 4-Her can take the project.

Youth will receive their individual handbook when they attend the FREE, four-hour ASI RiderCourse. (Youth who have already taken the ATV project can use their old copies of the book.) The RiderCourse is for anyone enrolling in the ATV project and for anyone interested in participating in the state-level contest (July 30, 2009).

The RiderCourse is being scheduled in Columbus and in several other locations throughout the state. County training schedules will be announced in this newsletter, the 4-H electronic newsletter, and at the Ohio 4-H Engineering website at <http://4hengineering.osu.edu>. Look for more information at the ATV Safety poster session at Extension's Annual Conference. Questions? Please contact Randall Reeder (reeder.1@osu.edu) or Kathy Henwood (henwood.13@osu.edu or 614.292.0622).

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TIP of the MONTH

Aletha Reshan, Emergency Management Planning and Education Program Coordinator

Cold weather is upon us, which brings our attention to fire safety. It's time to turn on the furnace, cut the wood for the fireplace or wood burner, and string holiday lights and decorations. While this creates an image of warmth, coziness, and good times it also sets into motion an array of fire hazards. According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), heating fires account for 36% of residential home fires in rural areas every year. Creosote buildup is cited as the leading cause. The holiday season itself is also a very active time for fires. "Each year fires occurring during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 Americans, injure 1,650 more, and cause over \$990 million in damage" (USFA). To minimize fire hazards during the cold weather months and holiday season remember these fire safety practices:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of home. Test monthly.
- Extend all vent pipes three feet about roof.
- Change furnace filter regularly.
- Have furnace, chimney, and woodstove inspected annually.
- Use metal mesh screen for fireplaces. Leave glass doors open while burning a fire.
- Make sure walls around wood stoves are fire resistant.
- Keep air inlet on wood stoves open and never restrict air supply to fireplaces, doing so can contribute to creosote buildup.
- Never use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Use only seasoned hardwood, soft moist wood accelerates creosote buildup.
- Build small fires that burn completely and produce less smoke.
- Never leave a fire, candles, or holiday lights unattended.
- Select fresh cut Christmas trees that have a sticky trunk and needles that are green and hard to pull back from the branches.
- The maximum time a live Christmas should be left up is two weeks.
- Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.
- Do not use any type of open flame on or around a Christmas tree.
- Do not burn tree branches, needles, or gift wrapping in fireplace or wood stove as this can result in a large fire with sparks and embers that could start a chimney fire.
- Inspect and maintain holiday lights. Use products listed by an approved testing laboratory.
- Do not link more than three sets of lights together. Wires should never feel warm.
- Make sure decorations and artificial Christmas trees are flame retardant.

For more information on fire safety, please visit www.usfa.fema.gov.

ARTICLE of the MONTH:

“FALL SHOULD BE A SEASON, NOT AN EVENT - Ladder Safety at Home & Work”

Tim Butcher, OSHA Program Coordinator

Many tasks that need to be done this time of year require the use of a ladder. Proper ladder selection, maintenance, and use can keep you safe at home and work.

Injury statistics show that ladder accidents are common. Nearly 300 people die each year as a result of falls from ladders, and another 100,000 are injured. You might think to be extra careful while using ladders to reach very high places, but in fact, you only have to fall a distance of 11 feet to have a 50% chance of becoming a fatality.

The following tips will help keep you safe when using a ladder:

Recalled ladders. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued over 10 recalls of ladders in 2007. If you don't send in the product registration card or check the CPSC web site for recalls (<http://www.cpsc.gov>) you may not know your ladder is defective until an accident happens.

Inspecting ladders. Inspect your ladder before using it. Even if you are the only person who uses your ladder remember that all equipment has a lifespan. Only by inspecting your ladder before using it can you detect worn parts requiring repair or replacement.

Storing ladders. Wooden ladders must be protected from weather extremes. Water, especially freeze and thaw cycles, can damage the wood. Leading ladder manufacturers recommend fiberglass ladders be protected from excessive UV radiation because of a condition called fiber bloom. When fiberglass ladders have fiber bloom they can trap dirt and grease and compromise the non-conductive design of the ladder. This eliminates the ladder's electrical protection.

Using ladders. Select the right ladder for the job. Folding ladders and extension ladders cannot usually be used interchangeably. Don't stand on the top steps of a folding ladder because your center of gravity is too high and falling over is much more likely. Similarly, make sure your extension ladder has a secure point of attachment at the top and a secure base. When a ladder leans against a wall, the base should be out 1/4 of the height of the wall where the ladder touches. Measuring that can be tricky. An easy rule of thumb is to set the ladder so you can stand at the bottom of the ladder, reach out at shoulder level and grab a rung.

Make sure you have a safe ladder by sending in the product registration card when you buy a new ladder and check the Consumer Product Safety Commission's web site for the ladders you already have. Inspect your ladders before using them to catch problems before an accident happens. Remember to store your ladders according to the manufacturer's recommendations and setup and use your ladders in the most stable way possible. Follow all of these tips and you can help make sure that the shorter days of winter will be spent thinking about the coming spring and not about how you are going to get well.

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
