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

Vol.2 No. 5 May 2009

THOUGHTS from the EDITOR - CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

'DOWN the ROAD' with ATV SAFETY

BEING PREPARED WHILE TRAVELLING

ARTICLE of the MONTH: THE SOUNDS of SPRING

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### **THOUGHTS from the EDITOR - CALL BEFORE YOU DIG**

#### **Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader**

Spring is here, along with all the activity that it brings. In the farm fields or at the homestead, there is a lot to do. And a common spring-time chore is digging.

Digging can be classified into small and large projects. Typical spring activities can include replacing drainage tile, building a new patio deck, or planting a tree. No matter the size of the project, if it involves a shovel or a backhoe, it is important to follow safety procedures.

Everyone must call the Ohio Utilities Protection Services (O.U.P.S.) at 1-800-362-2764 . O.U.P.S. needs to receive notification at least 2 days (48 hours) before any digging can begin. This 2-day period excludes weekends and legal holidays. It is a free service, and is required by Ohio law.

After the call, wait for the utility company to locate and mark any underground utilities in the area. They will use color-coded paint, flags, or stakes. These identifiers must stay in place the duration of the project. Caution should be taken when within 24" of these markers.

This law is in place for everyone's protection. It affects all homeowners, farmers, and excavators and contractors. So be safe and call before you dig.

### **'DOWN THE ROAD' with ATV SAFETY**

Check out the Ohio 4-H ATV Safety Program on You Tube! You can view the video from <http://4hengineering.osu.edu/ATV/atvresource.htm>

The Ohio Ag Network recently featured the Ohio 4-H ATV Safety Program on their TV show, Down the Road. Dale Minyo and crew came out to the OSU Waterman Dairy Farm to film an ATV safety course in action. This little clip gives a great overview of how a course is run and the different riding practices the participants complete during the 4-hour course.

If you have 4-H members, tractor clubs, or any other group (youth or adults) that would be interested in getting their ATV safety course certification, please contact Kathy Henwood, 614-292-0622 or [henwood.13@osu.edu](mailto:henwood.13@osu.edu). We come to you!

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TIP OF THE MONTH: *Being Prepared While Traveling***

#### **Aletha Reshan, Emergency Management Planning and Education Program Coordinator**

Travel season is upon us. Soon there will be graduations, weddings, and vacations that require us to be out and about. Have you ever wondered how your family would be notified in the event you were unable to communicate due to an emergency or accident? The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) offers a solution to this problem! It's called the Next of Kin or Emergency Contact Enrollment.

Anyone who holds a valid Ohio Driver License, Commercial Driver License, Temporary Instruction Permit, or Identification can sign-up to have their next of kin contact information listed on their license or ID information. Law Enforcement and BMV personnel to contact your next of kin due to you being unable to communicate due to an emergency or accident will only use the information.

Your next of kin's contact information is not public information and it cannot be bought or sold for any reason. You have the ability to change the next of kin you have listed at any time and you are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the information you have provided. Enrollment is voluntary, free, and takes only a few minutes if using the online system. To enroll online, visit the Ohio BMV's list of online services at [http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/online\\_services/online\\_services.htm](http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/online_services/online_services.htm) and select "Next of Kin Emergency Contact Enrollment Online". There is also a link to Frequently Asked Questions. You can also enroll in person by visiting your local BMV Deputy Registrar Office. For more information you may call the Ohio BMV at 614-752-7600.

Happy and Safe Travels!

## **ARTICLE of the MONTH: *The Sounds of Spring***

**Tim Butcher, OSHA Program Coordinator**

Spring brings more than the songs of birds. Lawn mowers, weed whackers, hedge trimmers and leaf blowers join the chorus of sounds flying around the urban landscape. The noise from these tools can be more than annoying, they can damage hearing even after short periods of exposure. Modern lawnmowers have gotten much quieter than the equipment our parents used, but a typical gas-powered mower is still 85 to 90 decibels for the operator (95 for riding lawnmowers). A person exposed to 95 decibels for 4 hours is at risk of permanently damaging their hearing. Noise induced hearing loss is different than age induced hearing loss; it cannot be overcome by hearing aids.

Even if the 95-decibel riding mower is only used for one hour all the other sources of noise encountered throughout the day should be considered because the impact of noise adds up. A sound level meter is used to accurately measure sound, but its not required to know if the noise is dangerous. A good technique to use is the "three foot rule," which states, "If shouting above the noise is required to be heard by someone standing three feet away then the noise could be damaging your hearing." Considering that, many of the powered landscape tools in common use today could be a problem.

There are many choices today for hearing protection. There are headphones available that can be used to shield out damaging noise while allowing the user to listen to radio stations or a portable media player. Most hearing protection makes it easier to have a conversation because dangerous noise is filtered out, but speech can still be heard. In addition to preventing hearing loss, hearing protection makes it easier to concentrate without the distracting and disturbing noise that so many tools create. Less stress and more concentration, and when the yard work is done, no problem hearing the birds.

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*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](mailto:jepsen.4@osu.edu)  
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