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

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Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader

This wet harvest season is leaving fairly extensive damage to many Ohio fields. Sometimes ruts and sink holes are minor, barely noticeable depressions in the ground. Sometimes though, they are big enough to catch a tractor tire and cause serious property damage. The harvest safety tip of the month is to watch out for shifting ground and warn others about depressions and sink holes. Tractor rollovers are the number one cause of fatalities on Ohio's farms!

HARVEST SAFETY - LOOK OUT for the HOLES!

Dee Jepsen, State Agricultural Safety Leader

As harvest progresses in Ohio, one area that is rapidly shifting in the field is the wet ground. A message to field operators during this wet season, is to be on the lookout for ruts and sink holes

No matter the type of vehicle used to enter and exit the field, ruts are serious sources for rollover and potential injury. Look over the route of transport prior to driving through it. Be especially alert for areas that will compromise the vehicle's stability. In severe cases, gravel may need to be added before traffic flow continues, or simply seek an alternative egress route.

Drive slowly in areas of concern. Whenever possible drive on the higher ground, but be cautious of driving with a full load on a tilt. Rollovers can easily occur when the vehicle extends beyond its plane of stability. Loads may also shift in transport, increasing the chance of a rollover while traversing uneven ground.

Use extreme caution and travel at slower-than-normal speeds when transporting loads near water sources, i.e. creeks, rivers, or pond banks. Drive around ditches and waterways when possible and avoid crossing at steep slopes.

Understand the topography and sub-surface drainage routes of each field. This will help field drivers know where to be on alert for ponding water or any sink holes that may exist from a tile blow out.

Know the location of the drainage system, including tile lines and outlets. Record any modifications made to the system or any installation of new tiles. Although it is often hard to identify older systems that remain in the field, old maps from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or previous owners may know their whereabouts.

Additional steps to take to avoid rollovers in wet conditions:

- Set the vehicle's wheels as far apart as possible.
- Start forward motion slowly and change speeds gradually.
- Reduce speed before making turns.

- Use break pedals in the unlocked position during field use; but remember to lock them together after exiting the field before driving at transport speed.

All drivers - no matter their age or experience level - cannot ignore the risk of rollovers. Weather and field conditions change daily, and new terrain hazards can crop up quickly. Field operators are reminded to use caution and stay alert while working in wet fields this season.

FARM SAFETY DAY CAMPS

The 2009 Farm Safety Day Camp program has successfully been completed. Approximately 1,300 youth were reached with the farm safety message. We would like to thank the following counties for hosting a camp in their community: Putnam, Morrow, Licking, Monroe, Wood, and Camp Palmer.

A special thanks goes to our sponsors, Ohio Farm Bureau, Our Ohio and Nationwide Insurance, for providing the t-shirts each participant received. We look forward to working with everyone again for the 2010 Day Camp season! If you would like to learn more about hosting a Farm Safety Day Camp in your community next year, please contact Kathy Henwood at henwood.13@osu.edu.

FARM SAFETY POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

The time has come to announce the winners of the poster contest held this year! We are proud to congratulate Leah Baker of Paulding county for her 1st place entry with the theme of "Plant a good habit." Congratulations also to Claire Schroeder of Putnam county for her 2nd place entry with the theme of "Pond Safety." Both entries were for ages 8-10. Good Job! You will soon be able to view these winning posters on the OSU Ag Safety webpage at <http://agsafety.osu.edu>.

CHAIN SAW SAFETY

Tim Butcher, OSHA Program Coordinator

Many people are heading into the woods to fell trees and to build up their supply of firewood. Now is also a good time to review some of the basics of chain saw safety. A day of cutting wood begins with planning.

- Have the right saw for the work. The same saw for felling a 16-inch thick tree will not be the right saw for limbing the tree once it's on the ground.
- Maintain the saw. Dull and loose chains increase the risk of dangerous kickbacks and chain breakage.
- Wear the right equipment. Branches can fall unexpectedly so a hardhat is critical. Above ankle steel-toed boots, eye, hand and ear protection are also required. Wear close fitting clothing.
- Saw resistant chaps are also available to protect the left leg, where most chain saw injuries occur.
- Know where the tree needs to land. Look for overhead power lines and obstacles that can deflect a falling tree.
- Make sure there is a clear path of retreat when moving away from a falling tree. Move in a direction 45 degrees away from the base of the tree to avoid the sideway bounce or backward thrust of the tree.
- Use both hands when starting a chainsaw. Place the chainsaw on the ground to start it. Never start the chainsaw in mid air - pushing it away while pulling on the starter cord. This approach is unstable, unsafe, and a bad habit that needs corrected.
- When felling the tree use starter cuts on trees larger than 6 inches. Make a 45-degree angle cut on the side facing the intended direction of fall. First make the bottom notch about one third the diameter of the tree with the second cut meeting the first. The felling cut should be on the opposite side about 2 inches higher than the bottom of the notch.
- Leave enough of a hinge at the cuts so the tree does not bounce or roll after it falls.
- If a tree does not fall with the felling cut, wedges can be used to start and control the direction of fall. Stand to the side when driving the wedges in case they are ejected. A sledge is well suited to drive a wedge and should be at least 1/3 larger than the head of the wedge.
- After the tree is down, make careful planned limb cuts. The tree will continue to move as limbs are removed and limbs may have tension on them.

- While cutting logs and limbs to the desired size take the time to remove them from the area to minimize trip hazards.

Spending time in the woods cutting and collecting wood can be rewarding and a source of exercise. If the right amount of planning and preparation are a part of the process, a safe end to the day will be much more likely.

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
