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

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**THOUGHTS from the EDITOR-**

**Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader**

It's a new year - start it out right with a resolution to do something safe or healthy! Read the Ag STAT each month for ideas how.

### **SAFETY STAT of the MONTH**

A new feature of this newsletter is the safety stat of the month. Numbers usually don't help you stay safe, but they are a reminder of what can happen when we're not thinking or practicing safe habits. The first one for the new year: "Sledding accounts for 20,820 emergency room injuries each year in the U.S."

### **SLEDDING SAFELY**

**Dee Jepsen - State Safety Leader**

Sledding accounts for more injuries than those reported by skiers or snowboarders. And more than half of the 20,000 emergency room visits are head injuries. So to keep yourself safe while enjoying the backyard slopes, keep these tips in mind.

1. Choose the right hill - once snow covered, many obstacles are hidden. Select a hill that is not too steep; is void of trees, fences, ponds, or other obstacles; and does not send the rider into a street or parking lot.

2. Choose the right sled - the preferred sleds can be steered by riders and have brakes. Young children or inexperienced sledders should avoid saucers and plastic toboggans. Sledders should never use lunch trays, cardboard, or automobile hoods - they just don't offer the right safety features in a crash!

3. Dress for the cold - wear sensible winter clothing like hats, gloves, snow pants, a winter jacket and snow boots. Water-proof materials are the best. Never wear long scarves or clothing with drawstrings that could become caught on the sled. Helmets are good ideas, especially for young children. The best helmet to choose is a ski helmet, second best is a scooter or bicycle helmet.

4. Follow simple rules of a **SAFE SLED** ride:

**S** - Sit face-forward on the sled, never backwards or standing

**A** - Access the hill from the side, leaving the middle space open for other sledders

**F** - Follow other sledders at a safe distance, and don't tie sleds together

**E** - Exit the bottom of the hill quickly, getting out of the path of oncoming sleds

**S** - Steep slopes, ramps, or jumps should not be part of the sled hill

**L** - Let an adult know where your are sledding, and have one present in the event someone needs medical attention

**E** - Extra clothes should be packed for warmth

**D** - Don't ride a sled pulled by a moving vehicle

## **INJURY PREVENTION- WORKING in COLD WEATHER**

### **Kent McGuire – Ohio AgrAbility Program Coordinator**

It is the time of year when the days are too short, the temperature is colder, the wind is a little more brisk, and snow is always a possibility. No matter what the conditions are outside, there is still work to be done around the farm such as feeding livestock, breaking ice in the water trough, cutting wood or loading stored grain. Even though it may be tempting to “tough it out” or “work through it”, prolonged exposure to cold, wet, and windy conditions, can be dangerous, even at temperatures above freezing. Farmers who take certain medications, are in poor physical health, or suffer from illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or cardiovascular disease are at an increased risk for personal injury when working long days in cold weather. Take precautions to minimize the risk of injuries like frostbite or hypothermia during winter.

Clothing should be your first consideration when working in cold weather. Clothing should be selected to suit the temperature, weather conditions (e.g., wind speed, rain), the level and duration of activity. The following are recommendations for working in cold environments:

- Wear several layers of clothing. Trapped air between layers forms a protective insulation.
- Wear warm gloves, and keep an extra pair handy in case the first pair becomes wet.
- Wear a suitable hat that provides protection to your head, ears, and even your face in extreme conditions. 40% of a person’s body heat can be lost when the head is left exposed.
- Use the hoods of jackets or sweatshirts for added protection for your neck, head, face and ears.
- Wear appropriate footwear with warm socks. Footwear should not fit too tightly in order to allow blood flow to the feet and decrease the risk of frostbitten toes.
- Wear synthetic, wool, or silk clothing next to the skin to wick away moisture. Cotton clothing can lose insulating properties when it becomes damp or wet.

Additional safety precautions while working in cold weather should include:

- Avoid getting wet. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), body heat is lost 24 times faster when clothing is wet.
- Take short frequent breaks in areas sheltered from the elements, to allow your body to warm up.
- Avoid exhaustion and fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.
- Consume warm, high-calorie foods (such as pasta) to maintain energy reserves.
- Drink warm, sweet beverages, avoiding alcohol and caffeine, to prevent dehydration.
- Work in pairs (buddy system), especially in remote areas, to keep an eye on each other and watch for signs of cold stress.
- Have a cell phone handy to call for help in the event of an emergency.
- Shielding work areas from the elements can reduce wind chill or the chances of getting wet.
- Use insulating material on equipment handles, especially metal handles, when temperatures drop below 30°F.

For more information about the Ohio AgrAbility Program, please contact Kent McGuire, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at [m McGuire.225@osu.edu](mailto:m McGuire.225@osu.edu) or 614-292-0588.

## **OHIO’S STATE of PREPAREDNESS**

The Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation published their eighth annual report on each state’s level of preparedness in December 2010. This report, entitled “Ready or Not? Protecting the Public from Diseases, Disasters and Bioterrorism”, measures each state’s level of preparedness according to 10 indicators. Ohio is one of 11 states that met 9 out of the 10 indicators. The indicator that Ohio did not meet is Health Information Technology. The indicators are as follows:

- 1. Funding Commitment** — Did the state maintain or increase funding for public health programs from FY 2008-09 to FY 2009-2010?
- 2. Health Information Technology** — Does the state currently send and receive electronic health information to health care providers and community health centers?
- 3. Electronic Syndromic Surveillance** — Does the state health department have an electronic syndromic surveillance system that can report and exchange information?

- 4. Incident Response Capacity** — Did the state acknowledge pre-identified staff of emergency exercises or incidents within the target time of 60 minutes at least twice during 2007-08.
- 5. Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** — Did the state public health department activate its EOC as part of a drill, exercise, or real incident a minimum of two times in 2007-08?
- 6. After Action Reports** — Did the state develop at least two After-Action Report/Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs) within 60 days of an exercise or real incident in 2007-08?
- 7. Community Resilience** — Children and Preparedness — Does the state require all licensed child care facilities to have a multi-hazard written evacuation and relocation plan?
- 8. Foodborne disease detection and reporting** — Is the state able to rapidly identify disease causing E.coli O157:H7 and submit results by PulseNet within four working days 90% of the time?
- 9. Public Health Laboratories** — Surge Workforce — Does the state have the necessary lab workforce staffing to work five, 12-hour days for six to eight weeks in response to an infectious disease outbreak, such as novel influenza A H1N1?
- 10. Public Health Laboratories** — Did the state increase or maintain Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Treat (LRN-C) capability?

For more information regarding preparedness for OSU Extension and for assistance with preparedness programming, please contact Aletha Reshan at 614-292-9455 or [reshan.1@osu.edu](mailto:reshan.1@osu.edu). To view the report in its entirety, please visit <http://www.rwjf.org/publichealth/product.jsp?id=71566>. For additional preparedness programming resources, please visit <http://eden.lsu.edu/Pages/default.aspx>.

## REMEMBER to REFRESH CONTACT LISTS

The New Year is a wonderful time to refresh and update contact lists. Many individuals, businesses, and events maintain contact via Facebook, Twitter, texts, and emails. However, often there is a preferred method. Ensuring communications reach your intended contacts in the preferred method can be as easy as simply asking them to respond with their preferred contact information.

## WINTER DRIVING TIPS

### Tim Butcher, OSHA Coordinator

Highway safety is important any time of the year, but is especially crucial when the weather presents unusual hazards. Crashes are more frequent in winter, and getting stuck by the side of the road can be dangerous for both stranded drivers and passing vehicles. Winter can be hard on cars and several of the vehicle's systems will be tested to their limits. Consider the following tips to make collisions less likely by making sure your vehicle is in top operating condition:

- Get an oil change
- Check the battery
- Check fluids: antifreeze, brake fluid, windshield washer fluid, radiator fluid and power steering fluid
- Check wiper blades and replace, if necessary
- Check tire pressure
- Make sure the rear defroster works
- Use snow tires or all-weather tires
- Wash the car regularly to prevent salt damage
- Keep the fuel tank full. Less water will condense if the tank is full and fuel line problems are less likely. If you become stranded the car, a full tank will allow you to run the engine periodically to provide heat. Remember that poisonous gases can build up to dangerous levels in an idling car, so keep a window open, make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow and only run the car for short periods of time.

Be prepared for a winter emergency by carrying the following items in your vehicle:

- Ice scraper.
- Boots, winter gear and a blanket. In case you need to be outside the vehicle for any period of time or wait for help.

- Phone and charger. If you have a phone but no calling plan, you can still call 911 if your car breaks down or if you are stranded.
- Flares and a flashlight. Fewer hours of daylight and snowy conditions decrease visibility.
- Sand bags. They add some needed weight for stability while on the road and can be used under tires if you get stuck. If they are in the bed of a truck, put them in plastic bags to keep them dry and unfrozen.
- Tire chains, if you have them.

Driving can be stressful for many people. Adding concerns about weather and vehicle safety can make it worse. Leave plenty of time for driving delays and so you can slow down on less than perfect roads. Thinking ahead and managing car, road and weather hazards can take some of the stress out of getting around in the winter.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TIP of the MONTH – WHAT is a WINTER WEATHER WARNING?**

**Aletha I. Reshan, Emergency Management Planning and Education Program Coordinator**

**Understanding Winter Weather Terminology:** Ready America provides the following glossary to help us better understand winter weather terms:

- \* Freezing Rain – rain creates a coating of ice
- \* Sleet – rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground
- \* Winter Weather Advisory – cold temperatures, ice, and snow are expected
- \* Winter Storm Watch – severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next one or two days
- \* Winter Storm Warning – severe winter conditions have begun or will begin very soon
- \* Blizzard Warning – heavy snow and strong winds will produce a blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep snow drifts, and life-threatening wind chill
- \* Frost/Freeze Warning – below freezing temperatures are expected

For more information on winter storms and extreme cold, please visit

<http://www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/winter.html>.

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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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