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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

Most of Ohio has been impacted by the current winter storm. If your area is one of those, please feel free to use the EDEN network to obtain resources your community may need to respond and recover from the storm. The website is <a href="http://eden.lsu.edu/Pages/default.aspx">http://eden.lsu.edu/Pages/default.aspx</a>

Good information is provided for hypothermia and cold injuries, power outages in homes, food safety, carbon monoxide, pet safety, outdoor survival, personal preparedness, and traveling during a storm.

EDEN (the Extension Disaster Education Network), is a great resource for many emergencies, not just snow and ice. The <u>Disaster Watch</u> page provides links to critical information sources such as NOAA, NWS, USGS, declarations information, as well as FEMA's National Situation Update. Other resources may be found under the Topics and Resources sections of the Web site.

#### SAFETY STAT of the MONTH

Auto insurance claims increase from 23% to 50% depending on your location. The take home message - make sure you have the right coverage for your driving patterns. It is possible to increase your coverage during the winter months, especially with policies on younger drivers, senior drivers, or less experienced snow drivers.

Fire hazards increase during winter months. The top five causes include:

- 1. Alternative heat sources used incorrectly
- 2. Damaged or downed power lines
- 3. Frozen water pipes can burst leaving appliances and utilities to be electrically charged
- 4. Leaking gas lines or damaged/leaking gas propane containers
- 5. Generators that are not properly used or maintained

### **2011 FARM SAFETY ROUND-UP DAY CAMPS**

Calling County hosts for the 2011 Farm Safety Round-Up Day Camps
We are currently seeking counties to host a Farm Safety Round-Up Day Camps in 2011!

These day camps provide youth an opportunity to learn about agricultural hazards and injury prevention. The mission of the day camp program is to teach youth about rural dangers; however the campers do not have to be farm children to benefit from the educational sessions. Injuries from horses, livestock, ponds, lawn mowers and electricity can occur to anyone, not just farm kids. Campers learn in a fun, interactive way the consequences of poor judgment around power machinery, flowing grain, and livestock. Heading into our 14th year, approximately 17,500 youth have enrolled in this statewide event!

These programs serve as ideal conduits between businesses and community organizations interested in the health and safety of local youth. Many agencies use the Round-Up program to benefit their own outreach education efforts. For example, local electric co-ops have dynamic electric safety presentations, the YMCA has excellent water safety/water rescue programs, and health departments have a variety of health programs targeting younger audiences.

For more information about hosting a day camp, including the benefits and goodies sponsored at the state level, please contact Kathy Henwood, OSUE Agricultural Safety & Health Program Assistant, at <a href="henwood.13@osu.edu">henwood.13@osu.edu</a> or 614-292-0622. Deadline to become a day camp host is March 4, 2011!

### INJURY PREVENTION – SLIPS & FALLS in ICY CONDITIONS

### Kent McGuire - Ohio AgrAbility Program Coordinator

When the temperature drops, ice can become a severe problem on the farm. Water troughs ice over, barn doors freeze shut, and ice glazes over equipment stored outside. However, the most dangerous farm areas to navigate may be icy pathways, walks, and concrete pads. These can cause severe slip/fall injuries when an individual slides abruptly, resulting in a loss of balance. Here are some simple guidelines to reduce the risk of a slip/fall injury from icy conditions:

- Use the proper footwear that can provide some slip resistance and traction.
- Take short steps or shuffle, and try to ensure your torso stays balanced over your feet.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets. You can help break your fall with your hands free if you start to slip, and placing your arms out to your side can help to maintain your balance.
- Utilize handrails and grab bars, or follow a fence line in an effort to maintain your stability by holding on to a solid object.
- If applying salt to travel paths is not an option, apply sand, gravel, kitty liter, floor dry or some abrasive substance to provide a texture for traction.
- Use grassy areas as a secondary travel path. This will provide a course texture to increase traction while walking.
- Take extra precaution around livestock watering areas. Ice can form in theses areas by water being splashed or dripped around the perimeter of the tank.
- Minimize distractions to remain alert to icy hazards and avoid carrying bulky items that block your view.
- Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles or equipment; use the vehicle for support.
- Use 3 points of contact when mounting or dismounting large equipment (1 hand + 2 feet) or (2 hands + 1 foot)

For more information about the Ohio AgrAbility Program, please contact Kent McGuire, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at <a href="maguire.225@osu.edu">mcguire.225@osu.edu</a> or 614-292-0588.

#### **ICE STORMS & GENERATORS**

#### Tim Butcher, OSHA Coordinator

Ice storms and power outages are too often a part of winter in Ohio. Trying to be prepared for the next one or trying to get through an ongoing power outage leads many people to use generators. Consider the following guidelines when using portable power generators:

**Use an isolating transfer switch**- If you do not want extension cords running all around the house or if you need to power something that is hard wired, like a furnace blower, consider having a transfer switch installed. Although you can wire your generator into your panel, doing so without a transfer switch to isolate the current puts electric company employees at risk of electrocution. While you are running your generator it can back-feed into the utility service if you do not use an isolating transfer switch.

**Check your GFCI-** Many generators are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). In 2007 the Consumer Product Safety Commission (cpsc.gov) announced the recall of 13,000 generators that had defective GFCI's which posed a risk of electric shock. Remember to send in your product registration card so that you can be

informed about recalls of dangerous equipment. You can also search the CPSC website for recalls of your other products.

Create a safe environment- Generators do not produce only electricity, they also produce carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless gas given off by all burning fuels. It is slightly lighter than air so it tends to rise. Generators should not be run indoors under any circumstances, including garages, sheds and open side-barns. Check the exhaust port to make sure generator exhaust is blowing away from people, structures, or animal cages in the surrounding area.

**Know the symptoms of CO poisioning-** CO can become extremely toxic in the right conditions, and the symptoms of exposure are nearly identical to the flu. Sometimes people who think they have a long running case of the flu find out from their doctor that they have elevated levels of carbon monoxide in their blood. Carbon monoxide poisoning kills approximately 500 Americans each year.

Being without electricity at any time can be frustrating. Being without electricity during winter can be deadly. If you decide to use a portable generator, do not compound the dangers by using it unsafely. Read the manual, know where the electricity and the carbon monoxide are going, and use the Consumer Product Safety Commission to keep track of your products.

### CHAIN SAW SAFETY DURING TREE REMOVAL

## Dee Jepsen State Safety Leader and Tim Butcher OSHA Coordinator

Removing trees and limb debris is often a necessary chore following ice storms. Whether you're an experienced or novice tree trimmer, it is important to follow common safety practices when using a chain saw.

#### Chain saws:

- \* Not all chain saws are the same, so be sure to choose the right saw for the job. Large trees may need to be removed by a professional service, rather than your typical firewood sized saw.
- \* Maintain the saw. Dull and loose chains increase the risk of dangerous kickbacks and chain breakage.
- \* Use both hands when starting a chain saw. Place the chain saw on the ground to start it. Never start the chain saw in mid air pushing it away while pulling on the starter cord. This approach is unstable, unsafe, and a bad habit that needs corrected.
- \* 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 sideways bounce or backward thrust of the tree.
- \* 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 lest 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.

#### Personal Protection Gear:

- \* Wear the right equipment. Branches can fall unexpectedly so a hard hat is critical. Several hats also include a face shield to keep debris from flying into the face.
- \* Eye protection is very important. Safety glass or goggles offer good protection. Sunglasses or prescription lens glasses will not protect your eyes from high velocity, flying debris; these glasses can also shatter under impact and imbed in your eyes.
- \* Proper footwear is above the ankle, steel-toed boots; however a sturdy leather boot will also provide protection for smaller jobs.
- \* Chain saws operate at high decibel levels, so hearing protection is important to protect your hearing. "Ringing in the ears" is a condition that follows a day using a chain saw. This is a good indicator that you were exposed to damaging sounds, and hearing protection was needed.
- \* Wear close fitting clothing, no loose strings on hooded sweatshirts or frayed jeans to get caught in the saw. Leather gloves offer the best type of hand protection.
- \* Saw resistant chaps are also available to protect the left leg, where most chain saw injuries occur.

Removing downed trees and tree limbs following a storm requires different type of work than the typical yard chores. Over-exertion can show itself in the form of back and muscle strains. To avoid over-doing it, take rest breaks and get help from others with the larger branches.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TIP of the MONTH – POWER OUTAGES**

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

Given winter's harsh conditions of ice and snow, power outages are an inconvenience that can truly affect daily routines. If you or your loved ones are affected by a power outage, here are some safety strategies to help you cope with this inconvenience:

- \* Check in daily with friends and relatives to stay aware of everyone's situation and determine what arrangements need to be made to ensure everyone's safety.
- \* Dress in layers to insulate body heat.
- \* Consider going to another location if you are without heat.
- \* Never use an oven or charcoal grill as a source of heat.
- \* Only operate lanterns and fuel-based heating appliance in well-ventilated areas.
- \* Opt for battery-powered light sources rather than candles, matches, and lighters.
- \* Use a battery-powered radio or television to stay current on local news.
- \* Portable generators must always be used outside and away from doors, windows and vents.
- \* Turn off or disconnect electric appliances to prevent a power surge when power is restored.
- \* Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. A half-full freezer should be able to keep foods frozen for approximately 24 hours and full freezers should maintain food for approximately 36 to 48 hours. Placing food in unheated garage or cold parts of home is also an option as long as the temperature is 40 degrees or below.

Remember, carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that can kill in a matter of minutes when built up in a confined space such as home during winter. Always, always exercise extreme caution when using alternative heating and power sources as many can produce carbon monoxide. It is best not to experiment with an alternative heating or electric source during a chaotic time such as a power outage. Instead, plan for such events by researching what type of alternative heating and power sources would best suit your needs. Learn how to use the devices. Once comfortable with knowing how to properly use the devices, purchase the device which best suits your needs. Retain the manufacturer's directions to refer to when using the device.

For more information on winter power outage safety, please visit the Ohio Emergency Management Agency website at http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov/WinterPowerOutages.aspx

## **NEW OSU EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HOTLINE**

All Students, Faculty, and Staff: OSU Emergency Management has established a phone number for students, faculty and staff to call to determine the current status of the Columbus campus. Callers will hear a recorded

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message that will be used to communicate important information, such as cancellation of classes, power outages and building closures. To learn if classes are cancelled during weather emergencies (such as snow or ice), call 614-247-7777, rather than the Police Department or Service2Facilities. Add this number to your cell phone contacts list to stay informed in an emergency.

In addition, students, faculty and staff are encouraged to tune into WOSU FM 89.7 or check Ohio State's web page (<a href="http://www.osu.edu">http://www.osu.edu</a>) for information on weather-related university closings. Employees designated as "essential personnel" should contact their supervisors to find out if they are required to report to work.

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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 <a href="mailto:iepsen.4@osu.edu">iepsen.4@osu.edu</a>

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