

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

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ANNOUNCEMENTS – *Follow OSU Ag Safety and Health on Social Media*

ANNOUNCEMENTS – *Safe Digging for the Home, Yard and Farm*

ANNOUNCEMENTS – *National Occupational Therapy Month*

ANNOUNCEMENTS – *Updated Safe Handling of Anhydrous Ammonia Fact Sheet*

SAFETY RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT — *OSU Extension: Ohioline*

OHIO AGRABILITY — *Ohio AgrAbility in Action: Lift Creepers*

INJURY PREVENTION — *Hitching / Unhitching Safety with Equipment*

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – *How Prepared Are You for a Potential Grain Engulfment?*

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Follow OSU Ag Safety and Health on Social Media

You can now follow OSU Ag Safety and Health on Facebook or Twitter. These social media pages are updated on a regular basis providing useful information on agricultural safety and safety in the workplace.

OSU Ag Safety and Health Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OSUAgSafetyandHealth/>

OSU Ag Safety and Health Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OSUAgSafety>

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Safe Digging for the Home, Yard and Farm

Spring and summer seasons seem to spark additional excavation projects for home and landowners. The entire month of April is designated as National Safe Digging Month. The goal of this awareness campaign is to remind project designers and landowners to use the 811 hotline number to determine any underground utilities. No matter how big or small the task – anything from installing fences to using large tillage tools to rip the soil crust – it’s important to call 811 before the project starts. Never assume what you can’t see; high optic cable, phone, water and gas lines may be in your digging zone. The national 811 hotline protects the workers and environment from dangers of underground utilities. Before any new project, call 811 before you dig.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - National Occupational Therapy Month

April is occupational therapy (OT) month. OT practitioners focus on helping clients perform everyday activities to their highest potential. When injury strikes or long term wear of joints and muscles require rehabilitation, an occupational therapist provides the necessary care to improve our quality of life.

In Ohio, we also recognize the OT’s who help farmers stay farming after a life changing condition. These conditions can be the results of an injury, and also injuries that occur off the farm. Health related conditions may include chronic arthritis, genetic conditions from birth, as well as limitations from short- or long-term surgeries.

The Ohio AgrAbility Program works with OT practitioners to promote independence for people in agriculture. This program conducts on-site assessments for the worker to determine how he or she performs their job and helps find solutions that will meet their needs. Solutions often involve inexpensive modifications that help the person complete a job that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.

The Ohio AgrAbility Program is available in all Ohio counties. Learn more about the program on our website <https://agrability.osu.edu/>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Updated Safe Handling of Anhydrous Ammonia Fact Sheet

OSU Ag Safety and Health has revised and updated the “Safe Handling of Anhydrous Ammonia” fact sheet just in time for the 2018 planting season. The fact sheet can be found on Ohioline at: <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/aex-594>



SAFETY RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT – OSU Extension: Ohioline



Ohioline is an information resource produced by Ohio State University Extension. Through Ohioline, agricultural safety fact sheets can be accessed, as well as hundreds of OSU Extension fact sheets covering a wide array of subjects such as agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, community development, and 4-H youth development. The link to Ohioline is <https://ohioline.osu.edu/home>

Agricultural safety fact sheets can be found by searching key words such as: [agricultural safety](#), [farm safety](#), [small farm and garden safety series](#), and [ohio agrability series](#).

Ohio AgrAbility - Ohio AgrAbility in Action: Lift Creepers

Laura Akgerman – Disability Services Coordinator for Ohio AgrAbility

If you have ever had to spend hours sitting on the floor of your workshop working on equipment, you know it can be hard to move across the workshop floor, or to stand, sit, kneel, and bend while you work. You may have sat on a chair, or cushion, but had to move it every time you changed position, and the chair or cushion you sat on may not have provided support or comfort. When workers have disabilities or other physical limitations, including chronic pain conditions, it is even more difficult to get down on the floor to work.

One solution is a [Lift Creeper](#), a mechanic’s creeper with a padded seat and floor jack that will lift the operator from a kneeling height to a sitting or standing position without using their legs. The seat is a comfortable chair which provides back support and cushion, the armrests provide additional stability while seated, and give the worker a sturdy support to push themselves into a standing position. The wide wheel base makes the Lift Creeper stable, although you should still be careful about tipping it over if using it on uneven surfaces.

Workers can use their arms and hands to push and pull the creeper across the floor and into position, or they could use their legs to move it. Some [lift creepers will recline](#) to allow the worker to lay on their back to slide under equipment. Other lift creepers will lower to 8.5” seated height, but do not recline. Lift Creepers are available in [manual](#) (hand-pumped hydraulic lift) or [power \(electric powered lift\)](#) versions.

One Ohio AgrAbility farmer who uses the Lift Creeper is able to spend many hours working on his equipment because the seat provides support and cushioning. The , and the rolling creeper allows him to move across the floor without having to get up and down repeatedly, which would be difficult because of back and neck impairments. The ability to repair his own equipment, and not aggravate his back and neck while working has increased his productivity and helped him manage his pain. Working on the equipment does not give him days of residual pain, as it did in the past when he worked with a mechanics creeper, which did not have the back support or the ability to raise him to a standing height.

One of the missions of Ohio AgrAbility is to work with farmers with disabilities to identify ways to make changes or modifications to equipment, facilities or worksites to allow the farmer to continue farming. Another mission of Ohio AgrAbility is to offer resources and education to all farmers on how to reduce the risks of injury and introduce modifications and technology that help farmers stay safe, and work more efficiently.

For more information about Ohio AgrAbility visit <https://agrability.osu.edu/> or contact Laura Akgerman, Ohio AgrAbility and OSU Extension Disability Services Coordinator, at Akgerman.4@osu.edu, or 614-292-0622.

INJURY PREVENTION – Hitching / Unhitching Safety with Equipment

Kent McGuire – OSU Ag Safety and Health Coordinator

One of the most common tasks on the farm is hitching or unhitching equipment. The two most common tractor-hitching methods use the drawbar or the 3-point hitch assembly. In either case, there can be multiple elements involved in the process including: connecting the implement using a hitch pin, adjusting a jack stand, attaching safety chains, connecting the PTO shaft, connecting hydraulic couplings, or plugging in electrical connections. Common injuries during hitching are caused by pinch points, crush points, blunt trauma, and run-over. General safety guidelines to follow when hitching or unhitching equipment include:

- Review the operator manual of the tractor and implement before use.
- Ensure hitch attachments match the tractor hitch category.
- Assess the situation and make a plan prior to attempting to hitch the implement.
- Ensure any bystanders are all clear of the tractor and implement.
- Place the tractor in a lower gear and lower the RPMs to reduce sudden quick movements when approaching or pulling away from the implement.
- When assisting the operator, keep visual contact and communicate with the operator at all times.
- The ground person should stay outside of the wheels of the tractor until the hitch and drawbar are lined up correctly.
- Leave yourself an escape route. Plan a travel path to get out of the way should the tractor lurch towards you.
- Once the hitch and implement are lined up, make sure the tractor is in PARK and shut off the engine before installing the hitch pin or completing additional hitching tasks such as connecting PTO or hydraulic lines.
- Use only approved hitch pins. If hitch pins are damaged or bent, take them out of service.
- Make sure the hitch pin is locked in place or secured with a hitch pin clip.
- Before connecting or disconnecting hydraulic lines, ensure the pressure has been released from the system.
- Use proper lifting techniques to reduce sprains / strains when lifting or moving the implement tongue.
- Ensure there is sufficient tongue weight to stabilize the implement when unhitching.
- Use an approved size tongue jack to support the tongue weight of the implement.
- Only use jacks that are attached to the tongue. Temporary jacks can kick out or fail with minimal implement movement.
- Remove all additional connections prior to pulling away from equipment.
- When unhitching on sloped areas, chock the wheels of the implement to prevent unwanted movement.

For more information about OSU Ag Safety visit <http://www.agsafety.osu.edu> or contact Kent McGuire, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at mcguire.225@osu.edu or 614-292-0588.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – How Prepared Are You for a Potential Grain Engulfment?

Lisa Pfeifer – OSU Ag Safety and Health Education Coordinator

Preparedness is a concept with which we are all familiar. We learn where and how to exit a building in the event of a fire in grade school and that learning continues to build from there. You may note an exit sign in a building you enter, subconsciously marking a route out in the event of an emergency. You may assess alternative routes of vehicular travel when a roadway becomes flooded along your path. You may look for an elevator when you take your elderly mother to visit her doctor because you know stairs have become difficult for her traverse. You may look for a map kiosk at the trailhead as you set out on a hike at the nature preserve. All of those actions, thoughts, and assessment are a part of preparedness, regardless of the depth of that specific planning. Think about and examine those split-second brain processes for a moment, from there reflect on your daily work and movement about the farm. What occurs to you? Are you thinking – no exit signs exist, no directional or roadway markers exist, there is not a property or building map to be found? Will you recognize the lack of wayfinding on the farm the next time you leave the back door of your house to head for the farmyard?

Take this framework a step further and think about this in regard to working in and around grain on the farm. How will someone rescue you in that “what if” grain emergency. Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) are an integral piece of pre-planning for unexpected events at any time or for any situation, but in grain related incidents they can be a vital tool. EAPs or preparedness documents assist to save time for first responders when it is crucial and may ultimately be life-saving for victim or rescuer in certain incidents.

Agriculture is no longer a piece of the common fabric of the lives of many of those performing emergency rescue today. A first responder that arrives to a farm in a grain rescue situation may not be familiar with many of the pieces of equipment involved. Family members that have never operated the equipment might not have any idea where to begin to shut everything down.

Keeping employees and family abreast of the operating equipment and arming them with the resources to move quickly in the event of an emergency is a process that should not be overlooked. Knowledge is power.

Take measures to educate not only farm employees and family member, but additionally first responders that would be called upon in the event of an emergency on your property.

The farm operator is often familiar with all of the processes involved in grain storage and handling at their individual operation, but is there anyone else who is aware of every step, electrical source, or hazard at your facility?

Review your procedures for working in and around grain and think about how you can educate family members and employees of all of the hazards that may exist in the process from beginning to end. Establish a protocol of safety specific to grain handling for your operation and clearly communicate that to anyone that could be of assistance in the event of an emergency.

Below you will find a list of questions to consider that should help you assess the preparedness level of your own farm and employees and get you started in establishing an EAP for grain handling and storage at your own operation. Please ask yourself:

- Is the farm property easy to navigate and understand or is a map needed for anyone that would be called to the grain storage site in the event of an emergency? Think about how a neighbor, an employee, your spouse, your child, and a first responder could get to you if you were suddenly engulfed in grain.

- Do you always have a cell phone with you? Who would you call if you were stuck waist deep in grain and could not move? Would that person know what to do and how to do it?
- Is there any overhead wiring that would present a hazard for rescue vehicles in the event that first responders are called to respond to an emergency at your farm property? If there is, how could you plan accordingly to eliminate danger to the victim engulfed inside the bin or responders trying to gain access to assist in the rescue?
- Do you have a procedure for de-energizing equipment for all mechanical, electrical, pneumatic, and hydraulic components that operate inside or around grain storage confinement spaces? What steps can you take to ensure that potential electrical contact is eliminated and draw-off or sweep augers do not start with anyone inside the grain storage structure? Do you lock out and tag equipment whenever you enter? Would a neighbor, an employee, your spouse, your child, or a first responder know how to de-energize all equipment? Is there a way you can ensure they do have that knowledge?
- Do you have an entry process for entering bins on your farm? Do you use a tie-off system? Do you ensure no one ever works in grain alone? Do you have a spotter when you enter a bin and does that person know how to get help and shutdown all equipment?
- Do you have schematics of your bin storage system? Would those assist rescuers in the event of an emergency? Where are those documents stored? Who else knows where to find such documents?
- Where is the nearest rescue tube located? Would that fire department be notified in the event of an emergency at your grain storage location? Have the first responders of the responding department been trained in grain rescue? Does anyone on the responding team know your property first hand?

Take some preparedness steps today. Print a google map of your farm or draw one by hand, labeling all equipment involved in grain handling. Buy a lock to lockout power sources for grain handling equipment. Purchase a harness and tie off system for your bin. Check with local emergency rescue teams to find out what rescue jurisdiction your property falls within and where the nearest grain rescue tube is located. Invite the responding department for a site visit of your property and allow them to practice their rescue procedures at your facility. Any pre-incident planning can help cut response time in the event of an emergency. Put a plan in place and communicate it. Stay safe.

For more information about OSU Ag Safety, visit <https://agsafety.osu.edu/> or contact Lisa Pfeifer, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at pfeifer.6@osu.edu or 614-292-9455.

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 maybe 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
