

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

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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR - Be Aware of Winter’s Silent Killer

Dee Jepsen – State Agricultural Safety and Health Leader

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is often called the silent killer, because of its invisible features. As a gas, CO emits no color or odor, and is very common in many U.S. homes, offices, garages and farm shops during the winter months.

CO is produced when fuels are burned, such as gasoline, kerosene, propane, natural gas, fuel oil, wood, and charcoal. Culprits that emit deadly concentrations of this gas are common household items, including automobiles, gas powered generators, furnaces and chimneys. More than 200 people die each year in the U.S. from incidental carbon monoxide poisoning.

CO inhalation is easily preventable, yet it accounts for 50% of all fatal poisonings.

During winter months, it is especially important to be aware this gas may exist. And it is important to take steps towards prevention:

- Install one carbon monoxide detector in your home or office, and another in the garage or workshop.
- Test your CO detector each month.
- Change the batteries of your CO detector twice a year. A good reminder, is when you change your clocks each season, also change out the batteries.

Other ways to keep CO in check include:

- Have annual inspections on chimneys or furnaces, to be sure there are no blockages, corrosion, leaks or loose connections.
- Gas-powered heaters should be used in well-ventilated spaces, never in closed barns, workshops or garages.
- Open the fireplace flue completely when it is in use.
- “Warm-up” your car in open spaces – either outside the garage, or by opening the garage door.

Smoke detectors are also recommended for the same areas as a CO monitor. Together, these devices alert provide a quick alert for people to leave the area.

For additional information, contact Dee Jepsen at jepsen.4@osu.edu or 614-292-6008.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Building Independence Through Agriculture

Join us for a one-day workshop to focus on agriculture and horticulture as viable work options for individuals with developmental disabilities. Speakers and panelists will provide insight on adaptive employment models, as well as identify resources and assistive technology to support workers in these settings. Workshop participants will gain an understanding of the workplace opportunities and ways to overcome barriers for both the agricultural employer and their workers.

To learn more about the workshop, that will be offered in Columbus Ohio on February 26, 2019, click the link: <https://agrability.osu.edu/news/ohio-agrability-building-independence-through-agriculture>

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Grain C.A.R.T. Scheduling

Agricultural rescue training and education are an integral part to protecting our work force of families tied to agriculture in Ohio. The Grain C.A.R.T. (Comprehensive Agricultural Rescue Trailer) was designed and built to do that twofold. Opportunities exist to offer professional training to first responders and/or deliver grain safety awareness curriculum for outreach education to farmers and agricultural industries by scheduling the Grain C.A.R.T. for your area in 2019. Programming is being booked now to kick off in March. Please call or email Lisa Pfeifer at (614) 292-9455, pfeifer.6@osu.edu, if you would like to discuss program planning centered around the Grain C.A.R.T. for your geographic area.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Safety and Health Topics for your Winter Programs

Please consider safety for your late winter and early spring producer meetings – or county Farm Bureau sponsored Workers Compensation group rating programs – our staff will work with you to design a safety program specifically for your audience. Feel free to choose a topic of your own, or choose from one of the topics listed below. The average session is 45-60 minutes, but can be adjusted or combined with other topics to fit your needs. Trainees will develop a safety mindset and learn about workplace hazards. Agriculture is one of the most hazardous industries in the U.S. affecting a wide range of audiences. The diversity of the workers is reflective in the culture of farming, where there is a range of workforce age, competency level and certain regulation practices. We look forward to scheduling in your area for 2019.

Suggested Safety and Health Topics

Tractor and Equipment Safety

OSHA and AG

Noise on the Farm

Respiratory Hazards on the Farm

Grain Facility Safety and Health

First Aid on the Farm

Sun Safety and Skin Cancer Prevention

Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls on the Farm

Emergency Plans for the Farm and Agritourism Operation

ATVs and UTVs – training program for all ages and skill level

Electrical Safety for Farm Buildings and Equipment

Managing Safety with your Agricultural Employees

Grain C.A.R.T. – the Comprehensive Ag Rescue Trailer

Women in Ag – Tractor and Machinery Operation Programs – a hands on workshop

Contact Dee Jepsen at jepsen.4@osu.edu.

Ohio AgrAbility Program Topics

Farming with a Disability

Arthritis in Ag

Collaborating with Ohio AgrAbility

Gardening & Urban Ag

Preventing Injuries on the Farm

Designing Accessible AgriTourism

Contact Laura Akgerman at akgerman.4@osu.edu or Lisa Pfeifer at pfeifer.6@osu.edu.

Ohio AgrAbility in Action: Working in Cold Weather

Laura Akgerman – Disability Services Coordinator for Ohio AgrAbility

Working in cold weather presents challenges for all farmers and can be especially challenging if the farmer has a health condition or a disability. Some medications can make you more or less sensitive to temperature and can cause you to become dehydrated. Some health conditions such as diabetes and poor circulation may limit feeling in your feet and hands increasing the chance of frostbite.

To protect yourself from the cold, wear layers of clothing, warm gloves and hat, and keep an extra pair in case the first pair gets wet. Wear footwear that is appropriate for the weather and work conditions and is not too tight – tight shoes and boots can restrict the blood flow to the feet and increase the risk of a cold injury.

Take short frequent breaks and keep yourself hydrated with warm beverages (avoid alcohol or caffeine). Take your cell phone with you in case you have an emergency, and work with a partner when possible.

For more information about working in cold weather, please refer to the AgrAbility Fact Sheets [Injury Prevention: Types of Cold Stress](#); and [Injury Prevention: Working in Cold Weather](#).

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](mailto:akgerman.4@osu.edu), or 614-292-0622.

INJURY PREVENTION – Reducing the Risk of Back Injuries

Kent McGuire – OSU Ag Safety and Health Coordinator

Back pain can be a common issue in the agricultural industry because of the physical nature of work and the vast array of tasks associated with agriculture. Many workers are required to do heavy lifting, a tremendous amount of walking and work in awkward positions to complete tasks. There are a number of factors that can contribute to back pain including force, posture, repetition, and even inactivity. Back injuries can be chronic or short term, but at some point everyone will experience some form of back injury. Once a back injury has occurred, special consideration needs to be given to the spine, muscles and tendons to prevent a back injury from occurring again. There are several measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of a back injury and many tasks can be modified to relieve stress placed on the back. Some guidelines include:

- Maintain good posture. Don't slouch and when standing balance your weight evenly on your feet.
- Avoid working in awkward positions or standing for long periods of time.
- When changing directions turn with your feet, not your waist.
- Wear boots with high quality insoles and support the ankles reduces back pain.
- Use correct lifting posture every time. Use your legs to lift, instead of bending at the back.
- When carrying things keep them close to the body and make more trips carrying smaller loads.
- Limit repetitive tasks and chores involving poor posture. Alternating this type of task with less strenuous tasks can be effective at preventing back injuries.
- "Push" rather than "pull" objects.

- Carts and wheelbarrows are efficient and effective to use when feeding livestock or moving bulking or heavy items.
- Minimize stumbling or fall hazards by practicing good housekeeping methods in all areas of the farm.
- Utilize the right tool for the job and allow the tool to do the work. Minimize excessive force when operating tools.
- When in the seat of equipment, adjust the seat to position the thighs parallel to the floor.
- Consider installing mirrors or cameras on equipment to reduce the need to turn.
- Replace older equipment seating with new seats that have adjustable lumbar support, arm rests and adjustable positioning.
- Modify tasks or work methods to reduce the number of times needed to get on and off equipment.
- **Listen to your body.** Pain is the communication from your body that an injury is occurring or about to occur.

For more information about the 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 – Employee Emergency Response Training

Lisa Pfeifer – OSU Ag Safety and Health Education Coordinator

Family farm operations and small agribusinesses often onboard new hires by launching straight into the immediate needs of the operation, using an information on as needed basis kind of approach. No orientation manual to read or video to watch. No HR Department to visit. An employee might be shown the fridge in office and then be about their way to the matter at hand – work. Learning the lay of the land, some hands-on equipment training, information about timekeeping and tax forms, livestock handling and care instruction, and mentoring of tasks are likely all lumped into to the schedule of the first few days or weeks. It is important to get an employee up and running with minimal hand holding because there is generally more work than can be accomplished in the light of a day.

What goes uncovered?

More times than not emergency preparedness. It is hard to compete with a priority list of chores for the day.

Focusing on emergency or disaster response is not a priority because of the generally perceived minuscule threat. Emergencies and disasters happen! In fact, 76 percent of local governments have responded to a major disaster in the past 15 years (Source: the USDA funded Local Government Sustainability Practices Survey).

Establishing training mechanisms for all employees in the area of preparedness will assist in familiarity with access to first aid tools and lower response time in providing support in the event of an emergency.

The following are some things to consider in establishing an employee preparedness plan:

- In the event of an emergency how will people reconnect to ensure everyone is safe? Do not count on cell phones, have a call list. Include emergency contact numbers like the fire and police departments, poison control, family doctor, a trusted neighbor, and home and cell numbers for all employees.
- How will employees caught off-site make the reconnection? Will the scope or type of emergency have different effects on this process?
- Is there livestock to move or transport in the event of an emergency? Is there space to shelter livestock in place? Is there adequate capacity of transport for all livestock should it become necessary to move animals? Where is the alternative shelter located?

- Where are fire extinguishers located on the property? Are you certain employees know how to operate them? Is the proper type of extinguisher located near the various types of ignition sources present on the property?
- Do employees know where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is stored for chemical handling? Do employees know what PPE to use for the various tasks performed? In the event of a chemical splash or spill, do employees know where the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are located?
- Do employees know where a first aid kit is located? Have you established an injury response protocol for your team of employees and family workers?
- Have instructions been given about how to handle inclement weather?
- Do employees know all exit routes out of structures? Are there instructions on how to exit the property entirely if necessary?

Working through a plan and making employees comfortable with the actions of response will reduce injury and loss.

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
