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

Vol.5 No. 1 January 2012

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### **THOUGHTS from the EDITOR**

**Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader**

#### **A SECOND on SAFETY – CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING**

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by installing one carbon monoxide detector in your home and another in the garage or workshop. More than 200 people die each year in the US from accidental carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO inhalation is easily preventable, yet it accounts for 50% of all fatal poisonings in the developed world. CO is generated from all carbon-burning fuel sources, including: automobiles, furnaces and chimneys, gas powered generators. Homes should be checked annually for leaky chimneys or furnaces, and gas-powered heaters should be used in well-ventilated spaces, never in closed barns, workshops or garages. If it is necessary to “warm-up” your car, do it outside the garage.

#### **INJURY PREVENTION – REDUCING the RISK of INJURY in WINTER WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Kent McGuire – Ohio AgrAbility Program Coordinator**

Winter is here, but the day-to-day operations of the farm continue despite bitter cold, freezing rain, and significant snowfalls. The snow and ice may look scenic from inside the warmth of your home, but getting out in it may be a different story. Just being in the cold itself, without trying to take part in strenuous activity, is stressful to the body. Layered clothing is a necessity, but can be restrictive to the range of motion in your body movements. Individuals who continue to perform work activities in winter conditions are at a higher risk of a variety of injuries including frostbite, overexertion, muscle strain, falls, and heart attack. Some simple guidelines for reducing the risk of injury in winter working conditions include:

- Plan ahead and wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions, even a simple task may take longer to complete than planned.
- Remove or replace wet or damp clothing as soon as possible, including gloves.
- If possible, perform work during the warmest part of the day and take frequent short breaks in a warm dry area to allow the body to rest and warm up.
- Keep travel paths clear of ice and snow. Be observant to areas such as water troughs or leaking roofs / gutters, where liquids may have splashed and frozen over.
- When shoveling snow or removing ice:
  - Stretch your muscles before you begin.
  - Don't overload the shovel.
  - Take frequent breaks to stretch your back.
  - Bend your knees and let your legs do the lifting.
  - Avoid twisting motions, which can lead to muscle sprain / strain injuries.
- When walking on an icy or snow covered areas, take short steps and walk at a slower pace so you can react quickly to a change in traction.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets when walking. This can reduce the risk of completely losing your balance, and helps to prevent serious injuries to your head, neck and back in case you slip while walking on ice or snow.

- During the daytime, wear sunglasses to reduce glare and protect your eyes from UV rays being reflected by snowy ground cover.
- When transitioning from the bright outdoor environment to indoor areas, stop briefly to allow your vision to catch up with the change in lighting.
- Snow removal operations such as plowing, sweeping, and snowblowing can reduce visibility to near zero in the immediate area. Utilize a visual reference point to stay on course and avoid any potential hazards.
- Use caution with gas powered equipment. Dangerous carbon monoxide can be generated by gas-powered equipment as well as alternative heating sources. Use these items only in well-ventilated areas.
- Watch for signs of frostbite: loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia: uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms of hypothermia are detected, seek a warm location, remove any wet clothing, warm the center of the body first, and get medical help as soon as possible.

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

## Emergency Management Tip of the Month – WINTER WEATHER WARNINGS

**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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