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## Monthly Safety Blast

December 2013

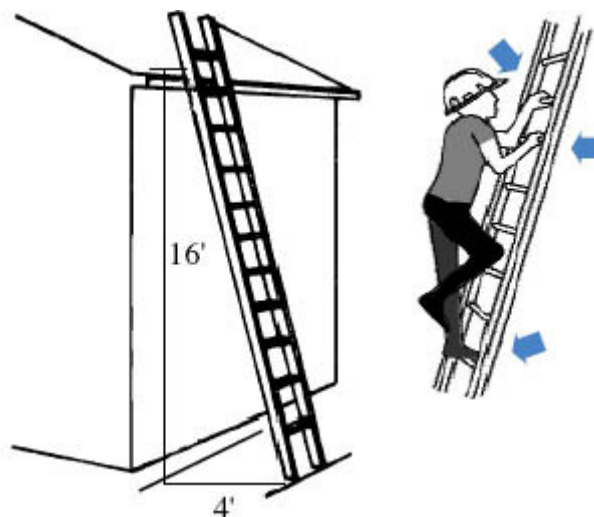
*Produced by the Southwest Center for  
Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education*

### Make Memories, Not Headlines

In 2010, there were 29.3 million emergency department visits for unintentional injuries and over 120,000 deaths. During the hustle and bustle of the holiday season it is easy to get in a hurry and unintentionally get hurt. How many of you have started a fire while cooking or been in a car accident related to speeding? We have all seen horrific headlines about a family gathering that ended tragically. For families who live on or visit a farm during the holidays, there are special hazards that should be considered in order to make happy memories instead of headlines.

Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries in the United States, accounting for over 9.2 million emergency department visits in 2011. Many of you will be climbing ladders to retrieve decorations or put lights on the house. You may also be storing agricultural supplies for the winter or performing maintenance. When using a ladder be sure to *maintain 3 points of contact* and *avoid using the top step/rung* unless it was designed for that purpose. The base of a straight ladder should be *positioned a quarter of the working length* of the ladder from the wall. To

avoid slips and trips, make sure *spills are cleaned up promptly* and the *floor/ground is free from debris* (e.g., toys). Older adults are at higher risk of serious injury or death from falls. We wouldn't want grandma to break her back on a furby.



Motor Vehicles are the leading cause of unintentional death in the U.S. During the holiday season there are more cars on the road as people travel to visit family and complete their shopping lists. Most 'accidents' can be avoided if drivers *control their speed and their road rage*. In rural areas, residents and visitors should also be aware of ATVs and machinery. Although the tractor and ATV look like fun to both adults and children, it is important to use them safely. Remember *not to carry extra riders* and *never operate a vehicle of any kind under the influence of alcohol*.



Poisonings are the leading cause of unintentional deaths for 25-64 year olds. Prescriptions and other medications should be *secured and used only as directed*. Children frequently get poisoned from medications found in their mother or grandmother's purse. If you are not sure about *mixing a prescription with an over the counter medication*, call the Poison Help hotline at 800-222-1222. Something as innocent as a decongestant can be deadly in combination with other medications. In rural environments, it is

also important to ensure all pesticides, fertilizers and cleaners are in *locked cabinets* away from children.

Fires in the home are commonly caused by kitchen appliances, heating equipment, cigarettes, candles, electrical malfunctions and Christmas decorations. *Never leave any fire or heating device unattended and keep heat and fire sources away from combustibles*. Make sure you have plenty of *working smoke detectors* and conduct *fire drills* at least twice a year. Children 14 years old and younger are more likely to be injured or killed by fire.

Water can pose a particular threat to children, as well. If there is a pond, water trough or pool on the property, make sure *children are constantly supervised*. A young child can drown in a 1-2 inches of water. Chances are the house will be full of family and friends. Assign 1-2 people to be babysitters and avoid a tragedy.



Keep your family safe and happy this holiday season. Slow down, prepare your home and farm for visitors and make happy memories that will last a lifetime.

## Resources

- CDC FastStats-Accidents or Unintentional Injuries: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/faststats/acc-inj.htm>
- Top 10 Causes of House Fires: <http://www.readersdigest.ca/home-garden/cleaning/top-10-causes-house-fires>
- Top Fives Causes of Accidental Home Injury Deaths-and How to Prevent Them: <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/the-home-front/2009/08/31/the-top-5-causes-of-accidental-home-injury-deathsand-how-to-prevent-them>
- Top Leading Causes of Death and Injury: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leadingcauses.html>

*Sharing is caring!*



Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education. For more information, contact us at 903-877-5998 or by email to [agcenter@uthct.edu](mailto:agcenter@uthct.edu).  
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