

Webster County Acreage Living

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Carbon Monoxide Hazards from Cars

Information provided by Tomas Greiner, ISUE Ag Engineer

Do you open the overhead garage door and start the car to let it warm up for a minute or two before driving away? **Don't ever warm-up a car in the garage, even with garage door open.** In less than two minutes gas fumes build to lethal concentrations in the garage. In an attached garage, fumes can quickly spread to the house.

To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning from vehicles:

- NEVER run engines in a garage, even if the garage door is open.

- Make certain all vehicles are tuned up and running clean.
- Check and repair exhaust system leaks.

When starting a car and leaving from the garage:

- Make certain everyone is in the car and ready to leave.
- Open the overhead garage door before starting the car.

- Start the car and immediately back out.
- Shut the garage door and immediately drive away. (Consult the owner's manual for recommendations when driving with a cold engine.)

Buy UL listed carbon monoxide alarms and install them near sleeping areas and on every level of your home!

Trees & Ice Storms

Information provided by 2nd Edition "Trees & Ice Storms—The Development of Ice Storm-Resistant Urban Tree Populations"

Ice storms cause considerable damage every year to trees in urban and natural areas. Tree branches that break and limbs that sag from ice accumulation cause the majority of electric power outages and utility damage.

The damage to trees from ice storms depends on several factors: amount and duration of accumulated ice, exposure to wind, and duration of the storm.

Storm damage can be placed into five categories: broken branches, trunk bending, splitting of main or "co-dominant" stems, complete trunk failure, and tipping or uprooting.

After storm damage has occurred, trees and branches deemed hazardous require immediate removal to ensure safety and prevent additional property damage. Trees that can be saved should have broken branches properly pruned to the branch collar. Loose bark should be cut back only to where it is solidly attached to the tree. A split fork of the main trunk requires tree removal.



Ice-damaged tree.

First Aid Kits for Your Acreage

Information provided by ISUE Publication Safe Farm—Farm Emergency & First Aid Kits, PM 1563k

Although farm-related injuries vary according to season and type of operation, the three most common causes are livestock, machinery, and slips or falls. More than half of all farm injuries (65 percent) in Iowa are caused by these hazards.

Responding to farm injuries is critical. Certain conditions can turn a minor injury into a life-threatening situation before professional medical treatment is available. Being prepared for medical emergencies and knowing the basics of first response can help minimize the extent of injuries. Preparation includes having the right materials available.

Keep in mind the following tips as you put together your farm emergency/first aid kit.

- **Know what's in the kit and how to use it.** Get appropriate training and renew periodically. Take refresher courses.
- **Have more than one first aid kit.** Consider developing several kits specific to the hazards and potential injury. For example, a first aid kit for the barn would contain different supplies than the kit you keep on your tractor in the spring.
- **Pack items for individual needs.** Make sure your emergency kit contains personal medical information and supplies for those with special medical conditions. A bee sting to someone who is allergic to bee venom could be life threatening.

The name and telephone number of a family doctor for everyone who might be involved in a medical emergency should be included in each kit.

- **Always include emergency numbers.** Include phone numbers of ambulance, hospital, or fire department, and have written directions about how to get to the home, field or work area.
- **Remember communication and heat.** Flares and a flashlight will help you signal for help if you're caught after dark or in an insulated area. Don't forget to pack matches (water-proof). Flares can also generate heat until help arrives.
- **Check your kits every three months.** Inspect for expired supplies. Replace items that are dusty. Make sure supplies fit the season.
- **Pack Red Cross manual or first aid chart.** This information is invaluable during a crisis when it's difficult to think clearly. These items list necessary steps to care for victims of various events, such as drowning, shock, fractures, or burns, and how to avoid additional injury.
- **Label all kits.** Store in a large nylon travel or sports bag with a visible label.

First aid manuals and a basic course of instruction are available from your local chapter of the American Red Cross.

March is *National Nutrition Month*®

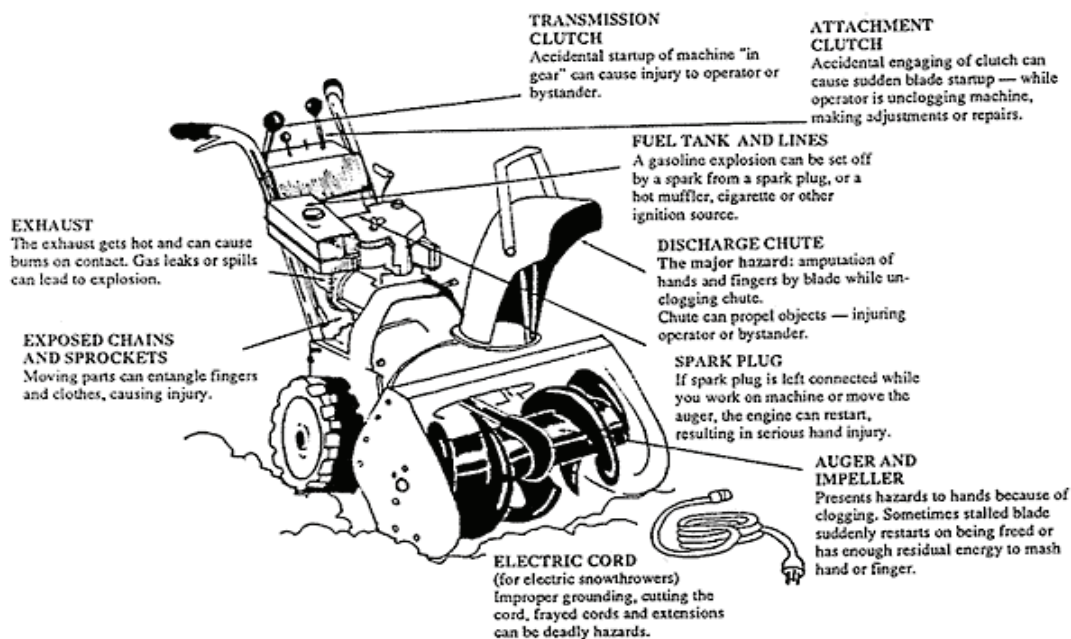
- Make your calories count. Think nutrient-rich rather than "good" or "bad" foods. The majority of your food choices should be packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients.
- Focus on variety. Vary your choices within each food group. Include more dark green and orange vegetables and eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day.
- Know your fats. Look for food low in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol to help reduce the risk of heart disease. Most of the fats you eat should be monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Check the nutrition label.
- Set a goal to be physically active at least 30 minutes every day.

Snow Thrower or Blower Safety

Information provided by the University of Nebraska Extension Publication G949

Whirling paddles, augers and blades have tremendous power. Accidents can be prevented by practicing safety and observing the following precautions:

- Inexperience causes accidents, so review the operator's manual before use.
- Never allow children to operate the machine, and make sure adults who operate have proper instruction.
- Coming in contact with the turning blades inside the discharge chute is the most common cause of injuries.
- Accidents occur most often when the discharge chute clogs with wet, heavy snow. You can't see the whirling blades down in the chute because snow covers the blades.
- Stop the engine before cleaning foreign objects or snow from the equipment. Know how to stop the engine or the throwing unit quickly.
- The best way to prevent accidents is to avoid clogging the chute. If plugging does occur, resist the temptation to put your hand into the auger or discharge chute because the tension built up by the plug could trigger rotation upon clearing.
- Proper clothing and footwear are essential. According to university studies, there is a correlation between accidents and difficulty in moving while operating snow removal equipment. About one-fifth of the injury victims lost their footing and accidentally stuck their hands into the discharge chute while trying to steady themselves.
- Clear the area of any debris before you begin. When clearing a gravel area, don't try to remove all the snow. Set the blades about an inch above the gravel. Plan a route before you start.
- Always clear snow up and down the face of slopes, not across the face. A good rule of thumb is not to attempt to clear anything steeper than a 35 percent slope or 19.3 degrees.
- Do not exceed the snow blower's capacity.
- Shut off equipment before making repairs or mechanical adjustments.
- Clean off excess slush and lubricate the drive train prior to storage.
- Remove the key as a safeguard against unauthorized use. If the system doesn't have a key ignition, remove the spark plug wire from the plug.



Common danger spots on a snow blower. Read the operator's manual to learn to operate it safely!

Questions Asked During the Months of February & March

- Q. I have been browsing through some garden catalogs. Where would be a good site for a vegetable garden?**
- A.** Vegetables grow best in a well-drained, fertile soil. The garden site should also receive at least 6 hours of direct sun each day. Avoid shady sites near large trees and shrubs. Most vegetable crops will not produce well if they don't receive sufficient sunlight. The site should also be fairly level to avoid soil erosion problems and free of difficult-to-control weeds, such as "Canadian thistle and field bindweed.
- Q. I have overwintered several bare-root geraniums in paper bags. When should I cut back the plants and pot them?**
- A.** In mid-March, remove the bare-root geraniums from their storage location and prune or cut back each plant. Prune out the shriveled, brown, dead material. Cut back to solid, green, live stem tissue. After pruning, pot each plant and water thoroughly. Place the potted geraniums in a sunny window or under fluorescent lights. The plants should begin to leaf out in a few days. Bare-root geraniums that are pruned back and potted in mid-March should develop into healthy, attractive plants that can be planted outdoors in May.
- Q. I would like to plant some raspberries this spring. Is it best to buy "new" plants or can I transplant some from a neighbor's garden?**
- A.** Purchase virus-free raspberry plants from a reliable garden center, nursery or mail-order company. Plants obtained from an old patch are often diseased. Virus-infected plants may appear healthy, but grow and yield poorly.
- Q. Deer have eaten off all the needles on the lower branches of my Colorado spruce. Are the bare branches going to die?**
- A.** The deep snow and prolonged period of snow-cover have posed serious problems for deer and other wildlife in the state. Denied access to food on the ground, deer have been forced to feed on trees and shrubs in woodlands, windbreaks and landscape plantings. Among evergreens, arborvitae and yews are the most susceptible to browsing by deer in winter. However, deer will also browse on pines and spruces when food is scarce. The extent of damage to the lower spruce branches will be determined by the presence or absence of buds. If buds are present, the lower branches will produce new growth in spring. The affected branches will initially have fewer needles than normal. However, the tree may fully recover in two or three years. If buds are absent, the affected branches will not be able to produce new growth and will die.

