



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week #13 – March 29 – April 2, 2021

Spring Safety

Introduction

With warmer weather and springtime in full swing, many of us are excited to get back outdoors and enjoy all that this time of year has to offer. It is important, however, to note the hazards and risks associated with some of our favorite springtime activities. By taking some of these into account, we can promote a happy, healthy transition from the colder months into the spring and summer.

Monday – The Bugs are Back

We want to get active outside, and so do the bugs! Warmer weather inevitably leads to the return of insects. While many insects are good for the environment around us, it is important to take preventative measures to avoid bites and stings. Some tips to keep in mind during this time of year are:

- Wear insect repellent when you are planning to spend a lot of time outdoors.
- If you know you are going to be in wooded areas, choose appropriate clothing. By covering as much exposed skin as you can, you face less of a likelihood of getting bitten/stung.
- If you see an ant hill, leave it be! Ant bites can be quite itchy and painful, and it is best to steer clear of their colonies.
- Check your pets! Fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes often hitch rides into the house via dogs and cats.
- Keep antihistamines and topical creams handy in your home in case you or your family encounters bug bites or stings.

Tuesday – Allergy Season

With springtime in full swing, trees, grass, and weeds are releasing pollen into the air. Pollen is a common allergen that the body sees as a threat. The immune system releases antibodies to fight the intruders, and histamines are released into the bloodstream, yielding a range of symptoms including itchy/watery eyes, sneezing, and a runny nose. While these allergies are not curable, here are some treatments and preventative measures to help keep allergic reactions to pollen at bay:

- Try to stay indoors at times when the pollen count is high. This normally occurs in the early morning, the evening, and when it is particularly windy outside. Pollen count can be found on local weather websites and news stations.
- Refrain from leaving doors/windows open to avoid letting pollen indoors.
- Clean the air filters in your home regularly to help circulate fresh air.
- Pollen can make its way inside via your hair and clothes. Wash your hair, remove outer layers, and leave shoes at the door to help prevent tracking pollen through the home.
- There are a vast number of over the counter and prescription allergy medications. It may be helpful to consult with your doctor to determine the right plan to manage your allergies.

Wednesday – gardening

This time of year is especially exciting for those of us with green thumbs, and it is important to ensure that we maintain safe practices when gardening. Some things to keep in mind when enjoying your time outdoors are:

- Wear gloves! Gloves can help to avoid blistering and scratches, but they can also help to prevent irritation and infection from things we may encounter in the garden such as insects, bacteria, fertilizers, and pesticides.
- Use the proper tools—just like on the job, it is important to use the correct tools for the tasks we perform while gardening. Only use tools for their intended purposes to avoid personal injury or damage to your tools/projects.



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- A wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses can help to protect your skin and eyes from the sun.
- The CDC recommends wearing sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher to prevent skin damage from the sun's harmful UV rays. Wearing clothes that cover the arms and legs can do the same.
- Stay hydrated—it is important to keep water close by to avoid dehydration while working outdoors.

Thursday – April Showers

April is now here, and so is the rain! With the rainy season beginning, it is important to keep in mind some of the hazards associated with wet weather.

- When driving in a rainstorm, never drive through a flooded road. Cars can be swept away in as little as 2 feet of water.
- Turn on headlights and reduce your speed when driving. This gives you more visibility and time to react to other drivers on the road.
- Clean rooves and gutters to ensure proper runoff.
- Keep a raincoat and umbrella handy, as showers can pop up with little warning.
- When entering a building during rainy weather, walk carefully to avoid slipping on wet floors.
- Have an emergency preparedness kit in your home, including items such as nonperishable food, a battery-powered light, drinking water, a radio, extra clothes/socks, and a first aid kit, in case of being stranded due to flooding.

Friday – free for all

This week, we have discussed some of the activities and hazards associated with the return of spring. Many risks are associated with other springtime activities as well, including DIY projects, sports, and outdoor gatherings. Can you share any springtime safety measures you have implemented to stay happy and healthy this season?