EXERCISE CARE TO AVOID INJURIES DURING DISASTER RECOVERY

Workers and residents returning to homes and work places after disasters such as tornadoes, earthquakes and ice storms should continue to exercise care to avoid injuries. The recovery phase can be the most dangerous part of any disaster. Dangers to both recovery workers and residents run the gamut from downed electrical lines and roads that are impassable to the possibility of injuries resulting from cutting and removing debris.

In all cases, the process of restoring electrical power should be carried out by qualified electricians. In these instances:

- All power lines should be regarded as ”hot,” and tests should be conducted to determine if there is either high voltage or low voltage in the lines.
- Personal protective equipment such as approved gloves and sleeves should be worn when repairing power lines.

Using chain saws to remove trees that have fallen or broken also poses the significant possibility of injury. Each year more than 36,000 people are treated for injuries from using chain saws.

Safeguards against injury while using a chain saw include:

- Operating the saw according to manufacturer’s instructions.
- Properly sharpening and lubricating the blades.
- Using the proper size saw for the job.
- Wearing appropriate protective equipment.
- Avoiding contact with power lines.
- Cutting at waist level or below.
- Tasking care to avoid “spring poles”: trees or branches bent, twisted, hung up on, or caught under another object.
- Keeping bystanders or coworkers a safe distance away.

For more information on disaster planning, protection and recovery, go to the Arkansas Department of Health website at ***www.healthy.arkansas.gov*** or go to ***www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters***

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