



Central Mississippi Operations

600 Melvin Bender Drive / Jackson, MS 39213 / Admin. 601-368-2304 / Emergency 911

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jim Pollard, PIO
Cell (601) 942-3518
Jim.pollard@amr.net

AMR Medics: Falls from Ladders Are Holiday Decorating and UN-decorating Hazard

(Jackson, Miss., December 10, 2018) – Draping electric icicles around the eaves, hanging wreaths and placing the angel atop a tall tree are only three parts of holiday decorating which often require a ladder. And later we have to take it all down, again using ladders. Paramedics at American Medical Response remind us, falls from ladders can cripple or kill and even short stepladders pose a hazard.

The National Safety Council and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported several thousand people per year in the US are injured in falls from ladders. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons reports that men and elders are at higher risk of injury from falling.

According to AMR spokesman Jim Pollard, "Elders are more likely to fall from ladders because their vision and balance may have changed and elders who fall often require longer rehabilitation."

Pollard said, "Men are more likely to be overconfident about using ladders and more inclined to take risks using them."

People who fall from ladders can suffer head injuries and break hips, arms and legs, he said.

According to the Home Safety Council, misuse of the ladder is the main cause of injuries due to falling off a ladder. In a recent study, the Council found more than half of those injured placed the ladder on uneven ground. Nearly half reached farther than they should. Almost forty percent fell after dark. More than a third fell after standing on the top two ladder steps. More than twenty percent drank alcohol while using the ladder.

Pollard said, "Most folks use ladders infrequently so they lack experience and skill with them. We're most likely to use ladders during year-end holidays and spring fix-up. With the year-end holidays, we face twice the risk because we have to take down all the decorations we put up. We all need to be mindful of the risk of ladder falls."

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Pollard gave this advice to prevent ladder injuries:

- Before climbing a ladder, think about your current health. If you have lost strength or it is harder to keep your balance, stay off the ladder. If your instincts warn you to beware of climbing ladders, stay off them.
- Avoid using a ladder outdoors after dark.
- Keep your ladders in good condition. Check ladders for cracks or weak spots. Be sure rungs are sturdy and locking devices work properly.
- The feet of the ladder must rest on a surface that is firm, level, dry and not slippery.
- When leaning a ladder against a wall, move the bottom of the ladder away from the wall one fourth of the height of the ladder.
- Do not lean ladders against gutters or other weaker parts of a building that may break away. It is safer to use ladders with built-in stand-off bars that hold the ladder off gutters and other soft parts of a structure.
- If you're using power equipment with cords, be absolutely sure the cords are in good condition. Metal ladders will carry an electrical jolt if a frayed cord is touching the ladder when the tool is running.
- Wear shoes that are dry and have enough tread to prevent slipping.
- Never use a ladder in front of a door someone may open.
- Insist that another person hold the ladder the whole time someone is on it.
- Follow the manufacturer's warnings on weight limits.
- Keep both feet on the same rung while you are working. It's safer to maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times.
- Do not stand on either of the top two rungs.
- Do not reach or lean so far in any direction that you cannot keep both feet flat on the rung where you are standing. Instead of reaching too far, climb down, move the ladder closer to the spot you need to reach, climb back up and reach safely.
- Keep your tools on a belt or in your pockets or hand them to your "spotter" so both hands will be free when you're going up or down the ladder.
- Do not use ladders when you have drunk alcohol.
- Do not use ladders outside on days with stiff winds.
- Remember: Climbing onto the roof from a ladder is especially dangerous.

Serving 20 counties, AMR companies are Mississippi's busiest ambulance services. In recent years, AMR companies have transported an estimated 30 percent of ambulance patients statewide.

About American Medical Response

American Medical Response, Inc., America's leading provider of medical transportation, provides services in 40 states and the District of Columbia. More than 28,000 AMR paramedics, EMTs, RNs and other professionals work together to transport more than 4.8 million patients nationwide each year in critical, emergency and non-emergency situations. AMR also provides fire services through Rural Metro Fire Department, www.ruralmetrofire.com. AMR is a subsidiary of Global Medical Response, www.GlobalMedicalResponse.com. For more information about AMR, visit www.amr.net and follow American Medical Response on Facebook @AMR_Social on Twitter and Instagram.

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Contact: Jim Pollard, AMR PIO, cell 601-942-3518; Jim.Pollard@amr.net

BEWARE OF “HOLIDAY HEART SYNDROME”: HEART CRISES SPIKE DURING CHRISTMAS, AMR MEDICS WARN

(Jackson, Miss., December 23, 2015) — The risk of a sudden, serious heart ailment is higher on Christmas Day and the day after, say paramedics at AMR. The medics recommend avoiding “triggers” for those ailments, paying attention to your heart and calling 911 at the first sign of a problem.

Emergency medical workers have given the phenomenon a name: “Holiday heart syndrome.”

The risk increases due to dietary mistakes, increased stress and depression and skipping medications. Too much alcohol, including binge drinking, can trigger atrial fibrillation. With that condition, the upper chambers of the heart can suddenly start to beat extremely fast. It is a potentially fatal heart condition. Very large meals and too much salt can also lead to cardiac crisis.

Stan Alford, operations manager at AMR Central Mississippi, said, “We should all be alert to the danger of ‘holiday heart,’ all the way through New Year’s. It’s important to recognize a heart problem quickly and call 911 immediately. All too often, the victim doesn’t tell anyone he or she is having symptoms such as a very rapidly beating heart, chest pain, dizziness, nausea or pain in the jaw or down the arm. Women suffering heart attacks are more likely to have pain in their backs and shoulders”

Medical authorities have determined that even people who appear generally healthy are susceptible to a “holiday coronary,” Alford said. **Many victims of a heart emergency delay calling 911 because they do not want to disrupt holiday festivities.**

Alford said December 26 is often busy for ambulance services and hospital emergency departments as people with heart problems have waited to get help until after Christmas Day.

Medical studies have shown the likelihood of dying from a heart crisis increases about five percent during the holidays.

Serving 20 counties, AMR operations are Mississippi’s busiest ambulance services. The Mississippi Department of Health has reported the AMR family of companies transported more than 40 percent of ambulance patients in the state in 2013.

About American Medical Response

American Medical Response, Inc. (www.amr.net), America’s leading provider of medical transportation, provides services in 40 states and the District of Columbia. More than 18,000 AMR paramedics, EMTs, RNs and other professionals work together to transport more than 3 million patients nationwide each year in critical, emergency and non-emergency situations. AMR, a subsidiary of Envision Healthcare Corporation, is headquartered in Greenwood Village, Colo.

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- 2 references: 1. www.webmd.com/heart/features/the-truth-behind-more-holidays-heart-attacks
(subtitle: Why cardiac problems spike during the holidays and how to stay heart healthy)
2. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/15050-clinical>

SAFETY TIPS: HOLIDAY TOY SAFETY



Each year, more than 3 billion toys and games are sold in the United States, and more than half of those are sold during the holiday season. Although the majority of toys are safe, they can be dangerous if misused or if they fall into the hands of children who are too young to play with them.

Whether children are working on a puzzle, playing with building blocks or even inventing their own games, there are several important safety factors to weigh:



Consider your child's age when purchasing a toy or game –read the instructions and warning labels to make sure it is appropriate for your child



Include safety equipment if you are purchasing toys such as bicycles, skateboards or roller skates



Check to make sure there aren't any small parts or other potential choking hazards



Use a bin or container to store toys to avoid tripping hazards



Look for points, edges or breakable parts that could be sharp and avoid those toys for kids under eight

Each year the "Trouble in Toyland" provides safety guidelines for consumers when purchasing toys for small children and gives examples of toys currently on store shelves that may pose potential safety hazards.

For more information visit amr.net/safety

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