

risk alert



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Keep wagon and sleigh rides safe

A wagon or a sleigh pulled by a horse or tractor is an activity that creates fun for many worship center members. Whether a ride is a way to take in the fall colors or just to get outdoors in the middle of winter, children and adults alike always enjoy the adventure.

However, this fun can quickly turn to tragedy. Each year, Church Mutual customers report accidents involving wagons or sleighs being pulled by horses or tractors. Teenagers and young adults sustain most injuries. Some of them include:



- A young girl fell off the side of a sleigh and was run over by the skis, breaking both of her legs. The sleigh had no side rails.
- A man was killed when he fell off the wagon he was riding on. He stood up to brush off his pants and lost his balance.
- A young girl's legs were crushed when the driver of the wagon took a corner too sharply and hit a building with the wagon. The girl was riding with her legs hanging off the side of the wagon.

Follow the rules to keep safety in this fun activity

Proper supervision is the key element to a safe wagon or sleigh ride activity. Making sure supervisors know what rules to enforce also is essential.

- Assign a spotter to assist with boarding and exiting. If steps are needed, utilize steps with handrails.
- Implement a no-standing rule while the wagon or sleigh is moving.
- Never allow riders to hang arms and legs outside the wagon or sleigh.
- Do not allow horseplay.
- Discourage jumping or climbing over the rails to disembark.

In addition to following these rules, other requirements include:

- Performing a pre-ride inspection of the overall condition of the wagon or sleigh.
- Only using a wagon or sleigh that has rails along the sides and back.
- Allowing only an experienced driver to operate the wagon or sleigh.
- Requiring slow travel speeds to maintain control.
- Selecting a route in advance. Avoid traveling on busy roads and on trails that are too bumpy or have large hills.

For a complete collection of the *risk alert* series, visit our Web site and look in the Safety Resources section.