

Stinging Insects

Safety Meeting Packet

Protect Your Workforce



Employees working outdoors may be exposed to stinging insects such as bees, hornets, yellow jackets, wasps, and fire ants. Employers should educate their workers about the risk of exposure, how to prevent and protect themselves from stings, and what to do if they are stung.

Depending on the body's tolerance to the insect's venom, workers may suffer health effects from mild discomfort or pain to a lethal allergic reaction. When the body has a severe allergic reaction, its immune system releases chemicals that flood the body. This can lead to anaphylactic shock. Blood pressure suddenly drops and airways narrow, potentially impeding normal breathing. This is a dangerous condition that requires immediate emergency care and can result in serious complications or death.

Located throughout the United States, these insects are most active during the warmer months.

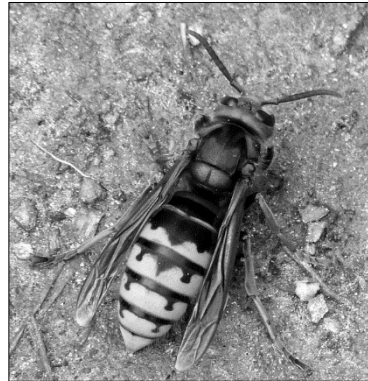
Bees



Common honey bees are typically non-aggressive and will only sting when provoked. They have a fuzzy round body with dark brown coloring and yellow markings. Extremely similar in appearance, the

Africanized honey bees (AKA "killer bees") are more aggressive and may sting in swarms. The nests of Africanized honeybees can be found in any partially protected areas like open trees, old cars, between fence posts, in old tires or even holes in the ground. Africanized honey bees are generally isolated to the southern regions of the United States, but all employees should be aware of the danger they pose.

Hornets



Larger than a yellow jacket, a hornet has a black or brown body with white, orange, or yellow markings. Their nests are grayish brown in color and made of a paper-like material. The nests are built high above the ground on tree branches or bushes.

Yellow Jackets

Smaller than hornets, yellow jackets are black with yellow markings. Their nests are similar in color and material to those of hornets. However, yellow jacket nests are often found underground. They can also be found in walls, building frames, cracks in masonry, or woodpiles.



Wasps

Wasps have slender, elongated bodies that are black, brown, or red with yellow markings. Like hornets or yellow jackets, wasps build their nests out of a paper-like material in bushes, low hanging branches, and corners of buildings or structures.



The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends the following prevention and first-aid measures for bees, hornets, yellow jackets, and wasps:

Worker Protection

Employees can take several precautions to prevent stings from bees, hornets, wasps, or yellow jackets, including:

- Wear light-colored, clean clothing, and cover as much of the body as possible.
- Avoid scented soaps, shampoos, and deodorants and do not wear cologne or perfume.
- Keep work areas clean since some insects are attracted to discarded food.
- Remain calm and still if a single stinging insect is flying around. (Swatting may cause it to sting.)
- If attacked by several stinging insects, run to get away.
 - Go indoors.
 - Shaded areas are better than open areas.
 - Do not jump into water. Some insects hover above water.
- If an insect is inside the vehicle, stop slowly, and open all the windows.
- Workers with a history of severe allergic reactions to insect bites or stings should carry an epinephrine autoinjector and wear medical ID jewelry stating their allergy.

First Aid

If a worker is stung, keep these steps in mind:

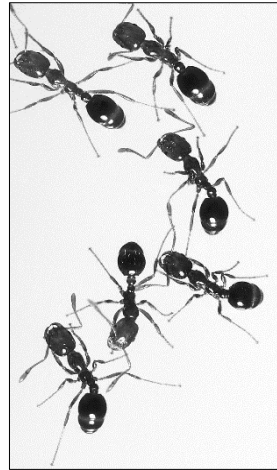
- Monitor them closely for a potential allergic reaction.
- Wash the site with soap and water.
- Remove the stinger using gauze wiped over the area or by scraping a fingernail over the area.
- Do not use tweezers or squeeze the stinger.
- Apply ice to reduce swelling.
- Do not scratch the sting as this may increase swelling, itching, and risk of infection.

Signs of Severe Allergic Reaction

If an employee who has been stung displays any of the symptoms listed below, he or she may have a severe allergic reaction and should receive immediate medical treatment.

- Faintness & confusion
- Hives
- Swelling of lips/throat
- Rapid heartbeat
- Difficulty breathing
- Nausea, stomach cramps, & vomiting

Fire Ants



Reddish brown to black, these ants are aggressive and attack with little warning. They bite and sting and their venom often causes a burning sensation. Fire ants are found mostly in the southeastern United States, and in small areas of New Mexico, Arizona, and California. NIOSH recommends the following precautions to avoid exposure as well as how to respond should exposure occur:

Worker Protection

Take the following precautions to protect against fire ant bites:

- Do not disturb or stand on or near ant mounds.
- Tuck pants into socks or boots
- Fire ants may also be found on trees or in water, so always look over the area before starting to work.
- Be careful when lifting items off the ground, as they may be covered in ants.

First Aid

If a worker is bitten by fire ants, first aid may include:

- Rub off the ants briskly since they will use their jaws to attach to skin
- Antihistamines may be helpful.
- If a sting causes chest pain, nausea, severe sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling, or slurred speech, seek emergency care immediately.

Waiting for Emergency Transportation

If the bites result in a medical emergency, be attentive and perform the following as necessary while waiting for help to arrive.

- Have the person lie down.
- Watch for signs of shock.
- If the person is unconscious, lay them on their side to allow drainage from the mouth.
- If there is no pulse, begin CPR.
- Check for an allergy kit containing injectable epinephrine.

For more information, please see the website for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH):

- https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Docs/Pictorial_Keys/Hymenoptera.pdf
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Safety Meeting Attendance Acknowledgement

Company Name _____
 Department / Division _____
 Meeting Date & Time _____ AM PM
 Meeting Location _____
 Name & Title of Individual Conducting Meeting _____

Key Meeting Discussion Points / Important Reminders:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Internal Procedures Reviewed:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

By signing this document, you confirm your attendance at the meeting and acknowledge the issues addressed above!

Employees in Attendance		
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
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Employees Not Present: _____

Suggestions/Recommendations to Improve Workplace Safety and Health: _____

Actions Taken: _____

Manager/Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Disclaimer:

The information provided above was assembled using multiple resources. However, these materials do not contain ALL the information available regarding the required safety standards under local, provincial, state, or federal law for your industry.
