

Venomous Arachnids

Safety Meeting Packet

Protect Your Workforce



Outdoor workers may be exposed to hazardous biting or stinging arachnids such as black widow spiders, brown recluse spiders, and scorpions. Employers must educate their workers about the risk of exposure, how to prevent and protect themselves from bites and stings, and what to do if they are stung or bitten.

Depending on the body's tolerance to the arachnid's venom, workers may suffer health effects from mild discomfort or pain to an allergic reaction that could prove fatal. When the body has a severe allergic reaction, the 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 dangerous condition requires immediate care.

Black Widow Spider



About the size of a pea, the black widow spider has a shiny, almost glossy rounded black body. The females have a distinctive red or yellow hourglass shaped mark on

the underside of their abdomen. The black widow spider is most common in the southern and western areas of the United States, but they can be found throughout the country. They are common to places that attract flies, like outdoor latrines. They can be found in and around woodpiles, under stones and piles of leaves, or in hollow tree stumps.

They also like to build webs in undisturbed and cluttered areas of basements and crawl spaces, or within sheds and garages.

The black widow spider is typically not aggressive and will only bite in self-defense or when they feel threatened. A bite from a black widow may be identified by the two puncture wounds it makes in the skin. Bites may go unnoticed or be painful with localized swelling. Pain will often progress from the site of the bite to the abdomen and back. Some people experience severe cramping or rigidity in their abdominal muscles. Other symptoms include: nausea, sweating, tremors, difficulty breathing, and fever.

First-Aid

If a worker is bitten:

- Clean the bite area with soap and water and apply ice to slow the absorption of venom
- Elevate and immobilize an extremity
- If possible, capture the spider for identification purposes
- Seek immediate medical attention

Worker Protection

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends the following worker protections:

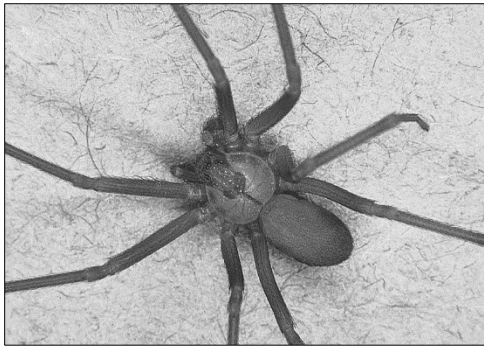
- Wear clothing to cover as much of the body as possible, such as: long-sleeved shirts, pants, boots, a hat, and gloves when handling boxes, firewood, lumber, or rocks.
- Inspect and shake out clothing and shoes.
- Use insect repellants on clothing and footwear.

Signs of a Severe Allergic Reaction

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



Brown Recluse Spider



These spiders are yellowish tan to dark brown in color and range from a quarter to a half inch in length. Adult brown recluse spiders have a dark, violin or

fiddle-shaped mark on their upper body that points toward the abdomen. Unlike most spiders, they only have 6 eyes arranged in pairs. The brown recluse is found in the midwestern and southern parts of the United States. These spiders are often found in dark and secluded areas, like underneath logs or in piles of rocks or leaves. They may also be found indoors within dark closets, shoes, or attics.

These spiders are not aggressive and will only bite if they are trapped directly against skin. Reactions and symptoms to a bite will vary depending on the bite location and the amount of venom injected. These bites often go unnoticed until the first side effects appear. Symptoms usually start to manifest a few hours after the bite. After reddening and swelling, a blister may appear at the bite site. Some individuals experience fever, convulsions, itching, nausea, and muscle pain. In severe cases, the bite leads to necrosis or death of surrounding cells and tissue. This results in painful open wounds that appear purple and black. If the wounds are not treated appropriately, necrotic, and ulcerous wounds can expand to affect both superficial and deep tissues.

First-Aid

If a worker is bitten:

- Clean the bite area with soap and water and apply ice to slow venom absorption
- Elevate and immobilize the extremity
- If possible, capture the spider for identification
- Seek immediate medical attention

Worker Protection

Recommended employee precautions include:

- Wear clothing to cover as much of the body as possible such as: long-sleeved shirts, pants, boots, a hat, and gloves when handling boxes, firewood, lumber, and rocks.
- Inspect and shake out clothing and shoes.
- Use insect repellants on clothing and footwear.

Scorpions

The characteristic shape of scorpions makes them easy to identify. They have a long, slender body with a segmented tail that arches over their back. Their tail contains a stinger and they are equipped with a large set of pinchers. Most scorpions like warm and dry climates and can often be found in the south to southwestern parts of the United States. They will normally hide during the daytime hours and are active at night. Scorpions like to hide under rocks, pieces of wood, or dig burrows in the soil.



Scorpions will sting if they feel threatened. The severity of the sting is based on the individual scorpion and the person's reaction to the venom. Mild symptoms include stinging or burning sensation at the site, numbness, tingling and swelling. Severe symptoms may include: restlessness, convulsions, staggering gait, thick tongue sensation, slurred speech, drooling, muscle twitches, abdominal pain and respiratory depression.

First-Aid

If a scorpion stings a worker:

- Contact a health care provider or poison control center for advice and medical instructions.
- Apply ice to the sting site but do not submerge the affected limb in ice water.
- If possible, capture the scorpion to identify the species.

Worker Protection

Recommended employee precautions include:

- Wear long sleeves and pants
- Use leather gloves to pick up items
- Inspect and shake out clothing and shoes.

For more information regarding arachnids, please see the following OSHA and NIOSH documents:

- http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/black_widow_spider.pdf
 - https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/brown_recluse_spider.pdf
 - https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Docs/Pictorial_Keys/Scorpions.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): _____
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
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(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____

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.
