



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Outdoor Safety

As summer approaches, you may notice an increase in the number of insects buzzing around outside. People with an allergy to stinging insects will want to take extra precautions this time of year. Up to 5 percent of Americans are at risk for anaphylaxis, a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction from insect stings.

This may be fatal if not treated immediately. Symptoms of anaphylaxis to watch for include: itching and hives over large areas of the body, separate or away from the site of the sting, swelling in the throat or tongue, difficulty breathing, dizziness, stomach cramps, nausea, and diarrhea. If you suffer from a stinging insect allergy, you should take extra precautions to avoid being stung.

Unfortunately, most people are not aware they are allergic to insect stings or bites until after experiencing a reaction. An allergic reaction occurs when the immune system overreacts to the insect venom.

Bees, Wasps, Yellow Jackets, and African Honey Bees:

Stings kill more people each year than all other venomous animals combined. Yellow jackets can sting repeatedly. Honey bees have barbed stingers that remain in your skin. African honey bees can threaten your life. Even if you're not allergic or sensitive to bee stings, multiple stings can cause anaphylactic shock.

- Look out for swarms; a hive could be nearby. Beehives and yellow jacket nests are found in hollow trees, culverts, and hanging from tree limbs.
- Keep food and drinks in your vehicle. Bees are attracted to sweet smells.
- Loud noises, engine vibration, and waving your arms can provoke an attack. If attacked, cover your face and run to the nearest shelter.
- Watch for unusual reactions to stings. Call 911 immediately.
- Remove bee stingers right away by scraping horizontally with a knife or credit card. Never squeeze the stinger, venom can be injected into the skin.
- Wash the area with soap and water to avoid infection. Ice packs, creams, sting swabs, or antihistamines can decrease pain and swelling.

Fire Ants:

When fire ant colonies are disturbed, they swarm over the victim and inflict as many as 5,000 stings in a few seconds. Fire ant venom is toxic and can cause a life-threatening medical emergency. They can be found under buildings, in mounds, in fields and ditches. They also nest in utility boxes, causing power outages and fires!

- Check electrical boxes regularly.
- Keep piles of dirt away from buildings.
- If nests are found, call an exterminator. Don't attempt to do deal with it yourself.
- Minor symptoms include severe burning pain and blisters.
- Severe reactions to bites, such as difficulty breathing and/or swallowing, should be treated by a doctor immediately.



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Ticks:

Many diseases are transmitted from ticks. Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever are the most common. Lyme Disease is caused by bacteria carried by deer ticks and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever occurs across the country, but most often on the Atlantic seaboard and in the southeast and south-central states. Years after exposure, you can suffer from heart abnormalities and other symptoms. Untreated, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever can cause flu-like symptoms, mental confusion, gangrene, and even death!

- Wear clothing that covers as much of your body as possible to prevent ticks from reaching your skin; for example, tuck your pant legs into your socks or boots. Check for ticks after each shift where you may have been exposed so they can be removed before they bite.
- Remove the tick by pulling the tick straight out or the head can break off. Clean the area immediately with soap and water or alcohol.
- See a doctor if you suspect a problem. Without early treatment, you can experience chronic fatigue, arthritis, and heart abnormalities.
- There are vaccines for Lyme Disease.

Spiders:

Black widow spider venom is 15 times more poisonous than rattlesnake venom! The brown recluse spider bite can damage body tissues. Watch for signs of spiders when working under houses and in dark basements or attics.

- Wear heavy-duty gloves when moving piles of brush or wood.
- If you notice a tingling feeling, sudden nausea, or stomach pain, convulsions, or signs of shock, you may have been bitten by a spider. Seek medical attention immediately.

Caterpillars:

Some varieties of caterpillars can be life-threatening. Hidden in their coat are short, hollow spines loaded with poison. When they touch you, the spines break and poison flows into your skin.

- Signs and symptoms of poisonous caterpillar contact include immediate burning pain, local numbness, swelling, nausea, vomiting, high fever, difficulty breathing and signs of shock. Get medical attention immediately.
- Use adhesive tape to pull the imbedded hairs from your skin. Wash the area with soap and water.
- Stay on the lookout for caterpillars. Most poisonings result from accidental contact. If necessary, spray infested vegetation with EPA-approved insecticide.

Keep safety in mind...It will save your behind!!



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Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests

