



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Bee and Wasp Safety

Almost everyone has experienced some type of bee or wasp sting in his or her life. For most people stings from these insects does not pose a major issue. However, for others, there can be a severe allergic reaction that is life threatening. Even if you have not experienced a severe allergic reaction to stings before, it is possible to have a severe reaction at any point in your life.

It is important to avoid bees and wasps as well as being able to recognize when someone is suffering from a severe allergic reaction from an insect sting.

Bee and Insect Sting Facts:

According to NIOSH, thousands of people are stung by insects each year and as many as 90–100 people in the United States die as a result of allergic reactions.

This number may be underreported as deaths may be mistakenly diagnosed as heart attacks or sunstrokes or may be attributed to other causes.

Most individuals only experience minor swelling and pain after being stung, but many individuals can experience other symptoms after a sting.

Insect stings can result in any of the following symptoms:

- Pain;
- Redness;
- Swelling (in area of sting and sometimes beyond);
- Flushing;
- Hives;
- Itching; or
- Anaphylaxis.

Sting Prevention:

Before performing any work in an area, it is important to do a site walk to look for any hazards, including bees and wasps.

- Often times, people start performing a task not knowing there is an active hive in close proximity to them.
- Avoiding areas where bees or wasps are is the most effective way to prevent stings.

- If you are severely allergic to bees or wasps, avoid any work that puts you at great risk of getting stung.
- Wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible when working in areas where there may be bees and wasps. It is harder for stinging insects to sting through clothing.

If you are stung:

If you are stung on the mouth or nose, even if you are not allergic, get immediate medical help as swelling could block airways.

Gently scrape out the stinger using a blunt object such as a credit card.

Remove the stinger as soon as possible.

To help prevent infection, wash the area with soap and water and keep clean until completely healed. Ice packs can be used to re-duce swelling.

Commercially available antihistamines may help reduce redness, itchiness, and swelling.

How to recognize a serous allergic reaction:

These symptoms could indicate a serious allergic reaction to insect stings. Seek first aid or emergency care if any of the following are presenting after being stung:

- Tightness of the throat or upper airway;
- Breathing difficulty;
- Weakness;
- Numbness and tingling;
- Hives;
- Anxiety;
- Abdominal cramps, diarrhea, or vomiting; or
- Signs of shock.

Summary:

Take the hazards that bees and wasps create seriously when working outdoors. Even if you are not allergic to them someone close by may be. Do a site check before entering an area to perform work. Avoiding areas where these insects are is your best option to prevent stings. When avoiding them completely is not an option and there is a nest in the area, try to not disturb them. If they are honey bees and contact cannot be avoided, have them removed to another location by a professional (they are protected by law). If they are any other kind of bee or wasp, and there is no other option, have them killed to protect yourself and others from stings. Always have an EpiPen nearby if you or a coworker is severely allergic to insect stings.

STINGS ARE NOT ONLY PAINFUL... THEY COULD BE DEADLY!!

