



Weekly Safety Meeting

Venomous Spider Safety

Venomous spiders, including Black Widows and Brown Recluses, can be found in the United States. These spiders can be dangerous to workers; they are often found both inside and outside workplaces.

Spiders are usually not aggressive, and most spider bites occur because the spider becomes trapped or unintentionally touched. It is important for employees to know how to protect themselves from such dangerous encounters.

Black Widow Spiders

Black Widow spiders are found throughout North America but are most common in the southern and western areas of the United States. They are identified by the unique red hourglass pattern on the underside of the spider's abdomen. They are usually found in workplaces containing undisturbed materials such as wood pallets, accumulated containers around eaves and fences and other debris. They also can be found where flies can be plentiful.

Black Widow spiders build webs between objects and bites usually occur when humans come into direct contact with their webs.

Bites of a Black Widow Spider

The bite from the Black Widow can be distinguished from other insect bites by the unique placement of two puncture marks in the skin initially, followed immediately by tremendous swelling.

The venom of a Black Widow spider is a neurotoxin that produces significant pain at the sight of the bite and then spreads to the chest, abdomen, or the entire body.

Brown Recluse Spiders

- The Brown Recluse spider, also known as the Violin Spider, is commonly found in the Midwestern and the more Southern states of the United States.
- The Brown Recluse is typically brown in color with an interesting darker violin or fiddle shaped marking located on its head. It also has 6 equally sized eyes, which is uniquely different from most spiders, which typically have eight eyes.
- Brown Recluse spiders are usually found in places that are undisturbed, secluded, dry and sheltered, underneath structures like logs, piles of rocks, or even leaves.
- Brown Recluse spiders may wander indoors and be discovered in places like dark closets, under furniture, or other objects.

Bites of a Brown Recluse Spider

The Brown Recluse spider cannot bite humans without some form of pressure against the spider and the skin.

Bites may cause a stinging sensation with localized pain. A small white blister usually develops at the site of the bite. The venom of a brown recluse can cause a severe lesion by destroying the skin tissue (skin necrosis), requiring professional medical attention.

Spider Bite Prevention

Workers can take the following preventative steps regarding spider bites:

- Inspect or shake out any clothing, shoes, towels, or equipment before using.
- When handling stacked or undisturbed piles of material, wear protective clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants, hat, gloves, and boots.
- Minimize the empty spaces between stacked materials.
- Reduce debris around outdoor work areas.
- Trim or eliminate tall grass from around outdoor work areas.
- Store apparel and outdoor equipment, and tightly closed plastic bags.
- Keep tetanus boosters up to date (every 10 years).

Spider Bite First Aid

Workers should take the following steps if bitten by a spider:

- Stay calm and try to identify the type of spider that bit you, if it is possible to do so safely, because identification could aid in the proper medical treatment protocols.
- Wash the bite area with soap and water.
- Apply a cloth dampened with cold water or filled with ice to the bite area to reduce swelling.
- Elevate the bite area, if possible.
- Do not attempt to remove venom.
- Notify your supervisor.
- Immediately seek professional medical attention.

WATCH OUT FOR VENOMOUS SPIDERS...BE AWARE THEY ARE THERE!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

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

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