

Job Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Site Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Topic 54: First Aid for Insect Stings and Spider Bites

**Introduction:** There is an abundance of insects and spiders on this planet that come in endless varieties of shapes, sizes, and colors. Entomologists (those who study bugs) have informed us that nearly every one of them is poisonous to some degree, but fortunately, the biting or stinging gear on most species is too short, small, or fragile to penetrate human skin. Some of the really small ones can burrow right into our skin pores or hair follicles and set up house. There are even microscopic versions that live on us without our even being aware of their presence. However, there are many species that are able to inflict painful, dangerous wounds. If not properly treated, the bite or sting may become infected or cause blood poisoning.

### Dangerous Insect and Spider Families:

- |              |   |   |              |   |   |         |  |   |            |   |
|--------------|---|---|--------------|---|---|---------|--|---|------------|---|
| ■ Spiders    |  |  | ■ Wasps      |  |  | ■ Flies |  |  | ■ Fleas    |  |
| ■ Scorpions  |   |   | ■ Bees       |   |   | ■ Ants  |  |   | ■ Lice     |   |
| ■ Centipedes |   |   | ■ Mosquitoes |   |   | ■ Ticks |  |   | ■ Bed-Bugs |   |

**There are only a few of these biting and stinging types that are lethal.** Fatalities only occur when a particularly ornery species (such as Africanized Killer Bees, Army or Fire-Ants, and Wasps) swarm in an attack and inflict thousands of stings or a person has an anaphylactic (allergic) reaction to the venom.

- **The real health hazard(s) associated with insect bites** (besides Anaphylaxis) is the transfer of bacteria by bloodsucking insects that can cause disease. Some of the bloodsuckers are: Mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and bed-bugs. Some of the more serious diseases they can transfer are Lyme's Disease, Malaria, Bubonic Plague, Yellow Fever, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, to name a few.

**To ward off these types of bugs, a quality repellant is important. If you suspect bed-bugs at home, call an exterminator.**

- **Out of all the spiders** in the United States, only the Black Widow and the Brown Recluse (fiddler spider) are really dangerous, and then only to very young children, the elderly, and those with adverse medical conditions that react with the neurotoxins in the spider's venom. Healthy humans may experience infection at the wound and unpleasant illness, but a fatal episode is unlikely. The bite should be kept clean and covered. Anti-venom is available for the Black Widow, but as yet, not for the Brown Recluse.
- **Bees and Wasps** are very territorial and protective of their nests. Africanized bees have been observed guarding their hive for distances up to a mile and a quarter and can remain agitated for several days. Certain hornet (wasp) species are extremely protective and can actually squirt venom into the eyes of an intruder. The average healthy person can tolerate approximately 10 stings per pound of body weight. People who are allergic to stings should always carry a kit with antihistamine tablets and a preloaded syringe of epinephrine which block anaphylactic reaction.
- **Fire ants** are the only ant species in the United States that are aggressive enough and have colonies large enough to kill a human. At least 30 deaths are attributed to these types of insects, with nearly all of them being very small children.
- **Only one species of scorpion** in the United States is really dangerous. The Sculptured Centruroides (centruroides exilicauda) is found in the Southwest desert states of California, Arizona and New Mexico. Very young children are susceptible to its sting and anti-venom is available.

**Conclusion:** Unless you are at risk of an allergic reaction, insects and spider bites will usually only subject you to pain and suffering. Infection can be avoided with proper wound-hygiene. The bloodsuckers are a whole different matter and the transfers of disease are a serious concern—use a good bug repellant! By taking the time to learn about the bugs in your area, you can avoid unpleasant encounters.

### Work Site Review

Work-Site Hazards and Safety Suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel Safety Violations: \_\_\_\_\_

Material Safety Data Sheets Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Chemical)

### Employee Signatures:

(My signature attests and verifies my understanding of and agreement to comply with, all company safety policies and regulations, and that I have not suffered, experienced, or sustained any recent job-related injury or illness.)

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These guidelines do not supercede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.