



INSECT AND ANIMAL SAFETY FOR OUTDOOR WORKERS

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – WILDLIFE SAFETY

May 2025

Toolbox Talk: Animal Safety for Outdoor Workers by Safety One Source

<https://youtu.be/jP7aiWF5mCI?si=cVndbmYv4uLy2Drq>

Why It Matters

Working outdoors exposes you to more than just weather and physical hazards — insects and animals can pose serious risks, including bites, stings, allergic reactions, and disease. Awareness and prevention are key to staying safe in nature.

Common Insect Hazards

1. Bees, Wasps, and Hornets

- **Risks:** Painful stings; severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).
- **Prevention:**
 - Avoid wearing bright colors or scented lotions.
 - Stay calm and back away slowly if you encounter a nest.
 - Use insect repellent if needed.
- **First Aid:** Remove stinger, wash area, apply ice. Call emergency services if allergic reaction occurs.

2. Pavement Ants and Allegheny Mound Ants

- **Risks:** Painful, itchy bites that may cause allergic reactions.
- **Prevention:**
 - Watch for mounds before kneeling or sitting.
 - Wear boots and tuck in pants.
- **First Aid:** Clean bites, apply topical treatment, monitor for swelling or allergic signs.

3. Spiders (Northern Black Widow)

- **Risks:** Venomous bites can cause serious health effects.
- **Prevention:**



- Shake out gloves, boots, and clothing.
 - Avoid reaching blindly into crevices or under debris.
- **First Aid:** Clean bite, apply ice, seek medical attention promptly.

4. Ticks and Mosquitoes

- **Risks:** Spread diseases (Lyme, West Nile, etc.).
 - **Prevention:**
 - Use EPA-approved repellents.
 - Wear long sleeves and pants.
 - Perform tick checks after work.
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Animal Hazards: Mice, Snakes, and Wildlife

1. Rodents (Mice, Rats)

- **Risks:** Spread diseases like hantavirus or leptospirosis via droppings or bites.
- **Prevention:**
 - Avoid handling live or dead rodents.
 - Use gloves and masks if cleaning up droppings or nests.

2. Snakes

- **Risks:** Venomous bites (rattlesnakes, copperheads, etc.).
- **Prevention:**
 - Wear boots and stay on clear paths.
 - Never reach into brush piles, woodpiles, or tall grass without checking first.
- **First Aid:** Keep victim calm, limit movement, seek emergency help — do *not* apply a tourniquet or suck venom.

3. Larger Wildlife (Raccoons, Skunks, Coyotes, etc.)

- **Risks:** Bites, scratches, and diseases like rabies.
 - **Prevention:**
 - Never feed or approach wildlife.
 - Secure trash and food sources at worksites.
 - Report sightings of aggressive or sick animals.
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General Safety Tips

- Keep a **fully stocked first aid kit** on site.
- Report bites or stings to a supervisor immediately.
- Know who on your team has allergies and where epinephrine auto-injectors are kept.
- Conduct **daily site inspections** for nests, burrows, or signs of infestation.
- Wear **PPE** such as gloves, boots, and long clothing when working in overgrown or wooded areas.

Conclusion: Be Aware, Be Prepared

Nature can be unpredictable, but it doesn't have to be dangerous. By staying alert, dressing appropriately, and knowing how to respond, we can avoid most encounters with insects and animals. Safety is about preparation — *protect yourself before the bite or sting happens.*

