

Preventing and Responding to Insect Stings

Because many tasks require employees to work outdoors, it's important to be prepared for the risk of insect stings. After all, insects such as bees, wasps and hornets are common throughout the United States—often creating nests or hives within the cracks or corners of roofs, in tree branches or even on various types of landscaping equipment. While an insect sting might only cause minor side effects for some individuals, the same sting could result in life-threatening allergic reactions for others. What's more, any individual who receives multiple stings at a time is at risk of experiencing complications from insect poisoning—including a headache, fever, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. With this in mind, review the following guidance to help prevent insect stings on the job and respond appropriately in the event that you or a co-worker gets stung.

Preventing Insect Stings



Consider these top tips to avoid insect stings:

- Wear clean, light-colored, and tight-fitting clothing that covers most of your body to limit your exposure.
- Try to avoid using any scented toiletries (e.g., soap, shampoo, deodorant, perfume, or cologne), as these can attract insects.
- Properly discard any food scraps to avoid attracting additional insects to the job site.
- If a single insect approaches you, remain calm swatting at it may increase your chance of getting stung. If multiple insects approach you, leave the area immediately and go indoors, if possible.
- Inform your supervisor if you have a history of allergic reactions to insect stings. Consider carrying an epinephrine autoinjector and wearing a medical bracelet that states your allergies.

Responding to Insect Stings



If you or a co-worker gets stung on the job:

- Tell your supervisor immediately. Have someone stay with you or your co-worker to watch for signs of an allergic reaction (e.g., excess swelling and shortness of breath).
- Wash the sting site with soap and water.
- Remove the stinger by wiping the sting site with gauze or scraping a fingernail over it. Don't squeeze the stinger or use tweezers.
- Apply ice on the sting site to limit swelling. Don't scratch it—this can increase swelling.
- If you or your co-worker show signs of an allergic reaction, seek medical attention immediately.

Safety First

Your safety is our first priority. Talk to your supervisor you have any further questions regarding insect stings.