# Interesting safety meeting topics: insects, ticks and stings

29 CFR 1926.21, 1926.50, 1910.268, 1910.141, 1910.151

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

**Opening question**

**Who here has pulled a tick off after work or been stung on the job, and what did you do about it?**

## Why it matters

Outdoor crews work where ticks, mosquitoes and stinging insects live: tall grass, brush, wood piles, eaves and equipment that has sat for a while. Ticks and mosquitoes can spread diseases such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus, and a sting can set off a severe allergic reaction that needs emergency care right away.

## Key points

1. **Know what bites and stings on this site**
   OSHA has no standard written just for insects and ticks, but in construction the general duty to train still applies (29 CFR 1926.21(b)(2)). On construction sites where harmful plants or animals are present, workers who may be exposed must be told about the hazards, how to avoid injury and the first aid to use. Learn where ticks, nests and ant mounds show up on this job, and tell your foreman about new ones.
   29 CFR 1926.21(b)(4)

2. **Cover up and use repellent**
   Wear long sleeves and long pants, and tuck your pants into your socks or boots in grass and brush. Light colors make ticks easier to spot. Use an EPA-registered insect repellent on exposed skin and follow the label. Clothing treated with permethrin helps against ticks, but permethrin goes on clothing and gear, never on skin.

3. **Check for ticks every day**
   After work, check your whole body, especially your scalp, ears, armpits, waist, the backs of your knees and your groin. If you find a tick, grab it close to the skin with fine-tipped tweezers and pull straight up with steady, even pressure. Do not twist it, burn it or smother it with nail polish or petroleum jelly. Clean the bite, report it, and see a doctor if you get a rash, fever or body aches in the weeks after.

ToolboxKits by ALC Media LLC. Not affiliated with OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. Not legal advice.

### 4 Stay calm around bees, wasps and fire ants

Look before you reach into equipment, boxes, eaves or holes in the ground, and watch for ant mounds. If a single bee or wasp flies near you, stay calm and still, because swatting can make it sting; if several attack, get away fast and get indoors or into a vehicle. If you are stung, scrape out any stinger instead of squeezing it, wash the spot and use a cold pack. Have someone stay with the person in case an allergic reaction starts.

### 5 Cut down on mosquitoes

Mosquitoes breed in standing water, so dump water from buckets, tires, tarps and other containers on site. Be extra careful at dawn and dusk, when many mosquitoes are most active. Use repellent and long sleeves, and tell your supervisor if you get a fever, headache or body aches after being bitten.

### 6 Know the signs of a severe allergic reaction

Call 911 right away if someone has trouble breathing, swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat, spreading hives, or dizziness after a sting or bite. Help them use their own epinephrine auto-injector if they have one, and stay with them. If you have a serious sting allergy, carry your auto-injector and tell a coworker where it is. On construction sites where 911 service is not available, the phone numbers of physicians, hospitals or ambulances must be conspicuously posted.

29 CFR 1926.50(f)(1)

## Scenario

Picture this: A landscaping crew is clearing brush along a fence line. One worker lifts an old pallet, disturbs a wasp nest and gets stung several times. A few minutes later, the worker says their throat feels tight and their lips are swelling. The truck is far away, and nobody knows if the worker carries an auto-injector. What should the crew do right now, and what should have been planned first?

## Crew discussion

1. Where on this site have we seen ticks, nests or ant mounds?
2. What repellent and long-sleeve gear do we have on the truck?
3. How do you check for ticks after work, and what do you do if you find one?
4. If someone has a severe reaction, who calls 911 and how do we tell them where we are?

**Bottom line**

**Cover up, use repellent, check for ticks every day, stay calm around stinging insects, and call 911 at the first sign of a severe allergic reaction.**

**Free to share and adapt** for non-commercial use under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0). Credit: ToolboxKits, toolboxkits.com/topics/insects-and-ticks/

# Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Insects, ticks and stings / Insectos, garrapatas y picaduras

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____ Location / Lugar _____ Company / Empresa _____

| # | Name<br>Nombre | Signature<br>Firma | Company<br>Empresa | Date<br>Fecha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | |
| 11 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | |
| 13 | | | | |
| 14 | | | | |
| 15 | | | | |
| 16 | | | | |
| 17 | | | | |
| 18 | | | | |
| 19 | | | | |
| 20 | | | | |

Trainer signature / Firma del instructor _____ Time / Hora _____

ToolboxKits by ALC Media LLC. Not affiliated with OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. Not legal advice.