Tool box topic: SPIDERS

As we head into Spring there are new Hazards we must be aware of. Spiders are one of the hazards. Please review these prevention steps and alert employee’s to the fact that spiders, including Black Widow spiders, may be present on their jobsites and to use extra caution to prevent spider bites. Attached is an OSHA fact sheet on the Black Widow spider and also a Spider identification sheet.

Prevention

Workers can take the following preventive steps:

- Inspect or shake out any clothing, shoes, towels, or equipment before use.
- Wear protective clothing such as a long-sleeved shirt and long pants, hat, gloves, and boots when handling stacked or undisturbed piles of materials.
- Minimize the empty spaces between stacked materials.
- Remove and reduce debris and rubble from around the outdoor work areas.
- Trim or eliminate tall grasses from around outdoor work areas.
- Store apparel and outdoor equipment in tightly closed plastic bags.
- Keep your tetanus boosters up-to-date (every 10 years). Spider bites can become infected with tetanus spores.

First Aid

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

- Stay calm. Identify the type of spider if it is possible to do so safely. Identification will aid in medical treatment.
- 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 bite area if possible.
- Do not attempt to remove venom.
- Notify your supervisor.
Protect Yourself! Workers may be exposed to Black Widow Spider

The black widow belongs to a group of spiders commonly known as cobweb spiders. The characteristic hourglass is located on the underside of the abdomen. Female black widows are dangerous and can bite and inject toxic venom.

**Identification**

- The female black widow is normally shiny black, with a red hourglass marking (see photo) on the underside of the abdomen.
- The abdominal marking may range in color from yellowish orange to red and its shape may range from an hourglass to a dot.
- The body of an adult black widow female is about ½ inch long.

**Habitat**

The black widow is commonly found in the following places:

- Outdoors - woodpiles, rubble piles, under stones, in hollow stumps, and in rodent burrows, privies, sheds and garages.
- Indoors - undisturbed, cluttered areas in basements and crawl spaces.

**Symptoms**

- The bite of the black widow may be painful or it may go unnoticed.
- The skin may display one or two bite marks with local swelling. Pain usually progresses from the bite site and eventually to the abdomen and back.
- Severe cramping or rigidity may occur in the abdominal muscles.
- Symptoms may include nausea, profuse perspiration, tremors, labored breathing, restlessness, increased blood pressure and fever.
- The pain from the bite will usually persist for the first 8-12 hours.
- Symptoms may continue for several days.

**Protection**

- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, hat, gloves, and boots when handling boxes, firewood, lumber, and rocks, etc.
- Inspect and shake out clothing and shoes before getting dressed.
- Use insect repellants, such as DEET or Picaridin, on clothing and footwear.

**Treatment**

- Clean the bite area with soap and water.
- Apply ice to the bite area to slow absorption of the venom.
- Elevate and immobilize the extremity.
- Capture the spider, if at all possible, for identification purposes.
- Seek medical attention immediately.
- If you have a heart condition or other heart problem, you may need hospitalization.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For more complete information: Occupational Safety and Health Administration www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA DSG 10/2005