

Often overlooked, injuries and deaths due to bees, spiders and other insects are a concern that companies should manage as seriously as any other hazard in the workplace.

Fatal on-the-job injuries do occur as a result of bites and stings from insects and spiders, with the majority of these deaths from bee stings.

- Inspect your work area before starting for signs of bees or wasps.
- Wear light-colored, smooth-finished clothing to cover as much of the body as possible.
- Keep work areas clean. Insects may be attracted to discarded food.

OSHA Standard 1926.21(b)(4) says that in job site areas where harmful plants or animals are present, employees who may be exposed shall be instructed regarding the potential hazards, and how to avoid injury, and the first aid procedures to be used in the event of injury.

- When a bee stings, its stinger, the venom sac and other parts of the bee's body are pulled out and left behind, killing the bee.
- Bee stingers should be removed as soon as possible since the venom sac remains attached when the bee flies off and can continue injecting venom.
- A wasp retains its stinger and it can sting many times. Wasp stings also carry a small amount of venom that may cause irritation and infection.
- Seek immediate medical attention if an insect bite or sting causes severe chest pain, nausea, severe sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling, or slurred speech.
- If workers are aware that they have a severe allergy to biting or stinging insects they should consider using a medical warning bracelet, necklace or carrying wallet card.
- Workers with a history of severe allergic reactions to insect bites or stings should carry an epinephrine auto-injector and consider warning their immediate co-workers before starting work.