



# BEES STINGS AND SPIDER BITES

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Each year, many construction workers experience bee stings and spider bites that are serious enough to make them lose time off the job.

## **Bees**

Each species of bee may have a favorite type of nesting spot including inside hollow trees, or in walls or attics. Some build nests that hang from branches or overhangs. You may find them in shrubs, bushes or hedges, or under logs or rock piles. Before you start any project, check the area for bee hives or nests, and call a pest control professional if you need to remove one.

If stung, most people experience local effects like pain, swelling, itching and redness around the site. In rare cases, a person could have a severe allergic reaction. This situation is serious and can cause anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock. Symptoms may take up to 30 minutes to appear and can include:

- Hives, itching and swelling in areas other than the sting site,
- Swollen eyes and eyelids,
- Wheezing,
- Tightness in the chest and difficulty breathing,
- Hoarse voice or swelling of the tongue,
- Dizziness or a sharp drop in blood pressure,
- Shock, unconsciousness or cardiac arrest.

If you see any signs of a severe allergic reaction - even if you're not sure - call, or have a co-worker call 911 immediately. Also get medical help if the sting is near the eyes, nose or throat.

## **Spiders**

In construction, we find spiders everywhere - when climbing onto equipment, getting tools from the back of a pickup truck, in storage areas, or even when working beside a road. Although Indiana is home to nearly 400 species of spiders, we really only have two species to worry about - the black widow and the brown recluse. Neither spider will bite unless disturbed, but when a person is bitten by either of them, they should contact a physician immediately. Prompt medical treatment can prevent severe reactions and lessen the long-range effects of the bite.

The adult female black widow is the dangerous one. She is generally  $\frac{1}{2}$  to one inch long, and has a distinctive yellow or red hourglass design on the underside of her shiny black body. If she bites you, you may experience dizziness, blurred vision, breathing difficulty, nausea or severe pain around the bite area.

The brown recluse is general  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches long, and is a solid brown color with the shape of a violin or fiddle on the front half of its back. If bitten, you may not notice the bite for an hour or more.

The visible sign of recluse spider poisoning is a small, white blister at the site of the bite. The affected area will enlarge, become inflamed, and the tissue will be hard to the touch. A brown recluse spider bite can also cause damage to skin tissue that could result in an ulcer that won't seem to heal. As with the black widow, if you experience dizziness, blurred vision, difficulty breathing or severe pain, contact a doctor immediately.

Be safe - be aware of your surroundings. Look for signs of spiders. Wear gloves, and be careful anytime you reach into an area to grab something.

[Download the recording form here.](#)

