



Jim Persons
jimpersons@safetypride.com
707-889-0881

Spiders, Bugs and Hidden Hazards, OH My!

What do spiders and hidden hazards have in common? They are two completely different things. Well, I am sure most of you have heard about spiders being located in some work areas, and believe it or not, these are considered hazards.

Because we are nearing the completion of the project and many of us are starting to clean up and clear out gang boxes, carts, and trailers, we are going into places that may not have become exposed for quite some time. It is in these places that many spiders like to live and set up their homes. If your task will require you to clear out some long standing items, you will want to inspect around the area first and check for any signs of spiders, (and I guess webs would be the best thing to tip you off...), and you should ALWAYS wear sturdy gloves when picking/cleaning up items, even if it is just a stack of rags, as spiders do like to set up shop in those types of places as well.

There are a couple of spiders that are fairly common, that are dangerous, and that it is possible you might come across in your work on site. They are the Black Widow and the Brown Recluse. Both have a reputation that might be a little blown out of proportion, but they are not to be toyed with, as both kinds have venom that is toxic to humans, and their bites can be quite painful. Typically speaking, although their bites can be fatal to humans, it is actually quite rare that that happens (in less than 1% of bite cases) and usually happens with the incredibly young, the very old, and the very infirm. But we still should not take them lightly.

There can be lasting aftereffects from a bite, especially from the Brown Recluse, which can cause open sores that heal poorly and can leave a permanent scar. In many cases if you are bitten you might not feel the bite, or at most it will feel like a pinprick. Symptoms of a bite are varied, but include chills, fever, generalized weakness or listlessness, as well as swelling and rashes in the area of the bite.

If you do get bitten the best course of action is to stay calm, don't panic, and get yourself to

the nurses station right away. If you are working in an area and you spot either of these two spiders, leave them alone (as neither is aggressive, and will only bite if disturbed), and call your safety representative. He can make arrangements to have the proper exterminators come out and clear the area.

It is also important that we use this hidden hazard thought process for things other than just spider finding. Whenever we approach a task, we should just stand back for a second or two and think about what I could do to ensure I do not get hurt. It is typically the thing hiding in the dark, the thing we did not see or didn't think of, that gets unwelcome attention.