



SPRINGTIME INCREASES FLYING, CRAWLING, SLITHERING CRITTER HAZARDS

As the weather becomes warmer, you will find yourself working in outdoor areas that you didn't during the winter months. Whether you're performing activities such as mowing, weed-eating, and trimming, you may find yourself face-to-face with poisonous plants, insects, spiders, and snakes.

Contact with poisonous plants, bites, or stings may send you to the doctor's office or even the emergency room for a remedy.

Risk Management speaker Gordon Graham said ' if it is predictable it is preventable". If you can predict that there may be a poisonous plant, snake, spider or insect present then prevention is the answer, and to do that you should look and listen before you jump into an area where you may have danger lurking.

Spiders and snakes will soon be coming out of their winter dormant state and often hide where you may have occasion to work. Insect and spider bites can be dangerous, especially if you are allergic to them. A bite or sting may cause an allergic reaction called anaphylaxis, which can be a life-threatening event and should be treated immediately. Call 911 if you are having a reaction to a bite or sting.

BEES, WASPS, YELLOW JACKETS:

- Stings kill more people each year than all other venomous animals combined.**
- Look out for hives**
- Keep food and drinks in your vehicle. Bees are attracted to sweet smells.**
- Watch for unusual reactions to stings. Call 911 immediately!**

SPIDERS:

- Black widow spider venom is 15 times more poisonous than rattlesnake venom!**
- Watch out for spiders when working around wood piles, vegetation and other areas that are dark**
- Wear gloves when working in areas that may harbor spiders.**
- If you notice a tingling feeling, sudden nausea, or stomach pain, convulsions, or signs of shock, you may have been bitten by a spider. Seek medical attention immediately.**

SNAKES:

- Rattlesnakes are the most common poisonous snake in our area and can be found in areas that are protected, like wood piles or rock piles, bushes or tall grass.
- Rattlesnakes are often found where there are food sources for them like gophers, squirrels, and mice.
- Other places may be near streams or rivers that have recently flooded during the winter and have transported snakes on debris piles or logs downstream and deposited them on the bank near your cemetery.
- Leave the snake alone.
- Most people are bitten trying to kill them or to get a better look.
- If a snake bite contains venom, swelling occurs quickly.
- Call 911 and seek medical assistance immediately.

- Avoid running and do not panic.
- Do not cut the affected area or attempt to remove venom with your mouth.

Report all bites, stings, and contact with poisonous plants that cause a rash or swelling to your supervisor immediately. All of these are true medical emergencies and should be treated as such. When in doubt, call 911

Article courtesy of the Public Cemetery Alliance

by Mark Marshall, California Safety Officer, Golden State Risk Management Authority