

# POISONOUS SPIDERS



Venomous spiders are found throughout the United States. They pose a risk to you both on and off the job. They are most commonly encountered by those that work outdoors. Therefore, it is important for you to understand how to identify and avoid these spiders and what to do should you become bitten by one.

There are three types of venomous spiders, the black widow, brown recluse, and hobo spider. You can find black widow spiders throughout North America. However, they are most common in the southern and western part of the United States. They can be identified by the pattern of red coloration on the underside of their abdomen and their hourglass shaped body.

The brown recluse or violin spider is most commonly found in the Midwestern and Southern part of the United States. It is brown in color with a characteristic dark violin-shaped marking on its head and has six equal-sized eyes. Finally, you can find the hobo spider throughout the Pacific Northwest. It is large and brown with a distinct pattern of yellow markings on its abdomen.

To avoid an encounter with a venomous spider you should always 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; and minimize the empty spaces between stacked materials.

You may also consider removing and reducing debris and rubble from outdoor work areas, trimming or eliminating tall grasses from around outdoor work areas, and storing apparel and outdoor equipment in tightly closed plastic bags. Additionally, it is important that you keep your tetanus boosters up-to-date. Bites can become infected with tetanus spores.

Symptoms associated with spider bites can vary from minor to severe. Although extremely rare, death can occur in the most severe cases. Possible symptoms resulting from a spider bite include the following itching or rash, pain radiating from the site of the bite, Muscle pain or cramping, reddish to purplish color or blister, increased sweating, difficulty breathing, headache, nausea and vomiting, fever, chills, anxiety or restlessness and high blood pressure.

In the event you are bitten by a spider, stay calm. Identify the type of spider if possible. Identification can aid in medical treatment. You should also:

- 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
- Seek professional medical attention

## DISCUSSION QUESTION

**What are some symptoms of a venomous spider bite?**