



# TDCJ Risk Management's *Training Circular*

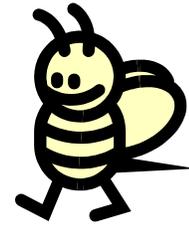
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## *Texas Spring Stings*



Do you have cabin fever? Can't wait until **SPRING TIME**? Well, it's **HERE!!** How exciting!! Springtime is perfect for picnics, fishing, boat rides, camping, BBQ's, horseshoes, and many more outdoor activities! It's also the time for **BUGS!** Now that winter is over, those who enjoy the outdoors will be looking forward to being outside on those cool nights but they will not enjoy fighting with insects that seem to enjoy human "company". The following information is being provided to help you to protect yourself and your family during "insect season".

### **Mosquito Control**

The best prevention for mosquito bites and not contacting the West Nile Virus is to follow prevention protocols. Empty standing water in old tires, buckets, plant containers barrels, and/or any other container that collects water. Wear insect repellent between dusk and dawn when outdoors. Wear long sleeved light colored clothing and pants.



### **WEST NILE VIRUS**

The West Nile Virus (WNV) was first detected in the Western Hemisphere in 1999 and has since rapidly spread across the North American continent into all 48 continental states, seven Canadian provinces, and throughout Mexico. In addition, West Nile Virus activity has been detected in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guadeloupe and El Salvador.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 15,000 people in the U.S. have tested positive for the West Nile Virus infection since 1999, including over 500 deaths. Many more people have likely been infected with the West Nile Virus, but have experienced mild or no symptoms. Statistically, a person's risk of contracting West Nile is low, and less than 1% of those infected develop serious illness from the virus. Those at highest risk for serious illness are the elderly and those with lowered immune systems. However, people of all ages can develop serious illness, so it is important for

everyone to protect themselves from mosquito bites to minimize the risk of infection.

However when symptoms do occur, they range from mild illness characterized by fever, headaches, sore muscles, rash and swollen lymph glands, including meningitis or encephalitis. Very rarely, the illness results in death. Incubation period is 3-6 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. If an unusual bird "die off" is noted, Contact the Risk Management Central Office (936) 437-4802 immediately for further instructions.



### **FIRE ANTS**

These pesky little critters can turn a nice picnic into a battle of the marching ants. Who is going to get to the basket of food first? Fire ants bite down into the skin, then sting downwardly as they pivot; the result is a characteristic circular pattern of bites. Fire ants bites produce extremely painful vesicles that are filled with fluid. The bite causes a sharp, stinging pain followed by



swelling. If a reaction occurs transport the victim to a physician.

### SCORPION

This insect just looks scary. They look like something out of a sci-fi movie that makes you want to run. Of the three species of scorpions in the United States that sting and inject poisonous venom, only one is generally fatal. The severity of the sting depends on the amount of venom injected; Ninety percent of all scorpion stings occur on the hands.



Signs and symptoms of scorpion stings include: sharp pain at the sting site, swelling at the sting site, which spreads gradually, discoloration at the sting site, nausea and vomiting, restlessness, drooling, poor coordination, incontinence and seizures.

### TICKS

Spring time always brings the best out in us. A nice game of fetch with the dog or a walk in the woods. But it also brings out the ticks. These little insects may be small but they can still be scary. If you spend time outdoors or have pets that go outdoors, you need to be aware of ticks. Ticks are small bloodsucking bugs. Many species transmit diseases to animals and humans. Some of the diseases you can get from a tick bite are; Lyme Disease, Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Tularemia. Some ticks are so small that they can be difficult to see. Ticks may get on you if you



walk through areas where they live, such as tall grass, leaf litter or shrubs.

To remove a tick, follow the guidelines; remove a tick as soon as you discover it. The longer the ticks remains attached to the skin, the more likely for an infection to result, Use tweezers when removing a tick or cover your fingers with a tissue, grasp it as close as possible to the skin, pull firmly and steadily until the tick is dislodged and then flush it down the toilet, wash your hands with soap and water.

### WASPS

The most likely insect to cause sting reactions in the Southeast and Southwest, wasps tend to nest in small numbers under the eaves of houses and buildings. They like picnic areas, garbage cans, and food stands. Did you know that a wasp can deliver multiple stings at one time?.



### YELLOW JACKET

A principal insect causing sting reactions in the Northeast and Midwest, yellow jackets tend to dominate in late summer and fall. Nests are located in the ground. Often seen in picnic areas, Yellow jackets (*Vespula* species, *Vespa* species and *Dolichovespula* species) are considered beneficial around home gardens and commercially grown fruits and vegetables at certain times of the year because they feed abundantly on insect pests such as caterpillars and harmful flies. Unfortunately, in late summer and early fall when their populations peak, the yellow



jackets' normal insect diet disappears and their feeding habits become a problem to man. At this time of year, the yellow jacket has an appetite for much the same food and drink as those consumed by man. Also, yellow jacket stings can result in a life-threatening situation, especially if the person is allergic to yellow jacket venom.

### HONEYBEES

Found throughout the United States at anytime of the year, except in colder temperatures when they remain in their hives, in Northeast and Midwest honeybees are major insects causing sting reactions. Hives are usually found in hollowed out areas such as dead tree trunks. Honeybees principally ingest nectar of plants, so they are often seen in the vicinity of flowers.



The honeybee with its barbed stinger will self-eviscerate after a sting, leaving the venom sac and stinger in place.

Here are some interesting facts about honeybees.

- \* Bees have 5 eyes
- \* Bees fly about 20 mph
- \* Bees are insects, so they have 6 legs
- \* Male bees in the hive are called drones
- \* Female bees in the hive (except the queen) are called worker bees
- \* Bees have been around 30 million years
- \* Bees carry pollen on their hind legs called a pollen basket or corbicula
- \* An average bee hive can hold

around 50,000 bees.

- \* Bees have 2 pairs of wings
- \* Bees are important because they pollinate approximately 130 agricultural crops in the U.S. including fruit, fiber, nut, and vegetable crops.

### AFRICANIZED BEES

#### Bee Alert.

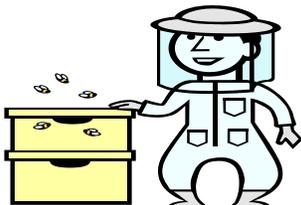
Africanized honey bees are well established in the wild population of honey bees in Texas. The Africanized bee is a hybrid (mixture) of African and European honey bee subspecies. Both are not native to the Americas. As a hybrid the Africanized bee appears identical to European honey bees. Individual foraging European and Africanized bees

are highly unlikely to sting. A swarm rarely stings people when in flight or temporarily at rest. However, established Africanized colonies are more highly defensive toward perceived predators than European colonies.

As of November 2004, 158 Texas counties have been quarantined for Africanized honey bees.

Winkler County was added to the Texas AHB quarantine list on November 9, 2004.

The quarantine allows beekeepers to move bee hives within but not out of the zone in an effort to prevent the assisted spread of Africanized honey bees.



### SIMILARITIES

- \* Look the same
- \* Protect their nests from predators by stinging
- \* An individual bee can sting only once and then dies
- \* Have the same kind of venom
- \* Pollinate flowers, produce honey and wax

### AFRICANIZED BEES CAN

- \* Respond quickly to disturbances by people and animals 50 feet or more from the nest.
- \* Sense vibrations from power equipment 100 feet or more from the nest
- \* Sting in large numbers
- \* Will chase an enemy up to a ¼ mile or more.
- \* Have a higher rate of reproduction (swarm more frequently).
- \* Nest in smaller cavities and sometimes underground (e.g. water meters and animal burrows) shelter.

### SPIDERS

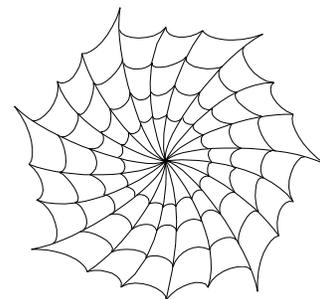
Texas has two venomous species of spiders, the black widow (*Latrodectus mactans*) and the brown recluse (*Loxosceles reclusa*). Both of these species of spiders can be found indoors and outdoors through out the State. The female black widow can be identified by its jet black color, globular abdomen with a reddish or yellowish hourglass on the underside. Male, black widow spiders are smaller, brown and nondescript. The black widow spider is aptly named because the female usually eats the male after mating. The venom of



the black widow is a neurotoxin and can lead to severe systemic reactions and in rare cases, death. The black widow's venom is reportedly 15 times more toxic than the venom of the prairie rattlesnake. However, only a minute quantity is injected with each bite. The most severe reactions occur in children and older adults. Black widow spiders

Black widow spiders can frequently be found in woodpiles, boxes, outdoor toilets, meter boxes, under eaves, and other undisturbed areas.

Brown recluse spiders are golden brown in color and can be identified by the characteristic dark brown to black fiddle-shaped pattern on the head region. Brown recluse venom has necrotizing enzymes that generally cause local or systemic reactions. These spiders commonly live in basements and garages of houses and can be found hiding between boards, boxes, and old towels and clothes in dark, undisturbed areas. Neither the black widow nor the brown recluse spiders are aggressive but they will both bite when accidentally trapped, disturbed or threatened. When conducting cell searches be aware of your surrounds.



**SNAKES**

Say the word and for a lot of people, shivers go up and down their spine. Are they sneaky, slimy, scary or skillful and simply sensational? People either love them or hate them but either way snakes play a important role in our world. When working outdoors this spring in the garden or working offenders in the field force be aware of your surrounding.

***Texas Poisonous Snakes*****Western Diamondback**

**Rattlesnake** - poisonous  
Point out the large head with small scales, the diamond pattern on its back; the black and white rings on the tail and the rattles. This snake is found in central Texas, including Miller Springs. This type of rattle-snake has been known to reach a length of 8.5 feet and eats mice, rats and rabbits.

**Cottonmouth** - poisonous

Point out the large head with small scales, the black color with hints of bands and the belly which has several colors but no pattern. This is a water snake that may get 6 feet long and eats frogs, fish, and small mammals in or near water. The Cottonmouth is found from central Texas eastward and is found in Miller springs along

the Leon River.

**Coral Snake** - poisonous  
Point out the small head and the red, yellow (white in this preserved specimen) and black bands. This snake is found in the wooded canyons and river bottom and may reach a length of 3 feet. It eats lizards, snakes and small mammals. It is found in central Texas eastward and is found at Miller Springs.

**Copperhead** - poisonous

Point out the large head which in a live specimen would be the color of a penny, the hour glass shape of the bands on the back and the colors on the belly. These snakes are found in wooded areas in Texas and are found in the wooded areas of Miller Springs. Copperheads eat small mammals. They may reach a length of 4 feet.

***What to do if .....******Insect Bites***

Although most stings or bites do not require medical care, remember some stings or bites can be serious or even fatal. If you have the slightest suspicion that someone is having a generalized or allergic reaction, seek Emergency Treatment Immediately. If you are stung or bitten at the unit or office, notify your supervisor immediately.

***Snake Bites***

Wash the bite with soap and water. Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the heart. Seek medical attention immediately. If bitten, notify your supervisor immediately.



**TEAM**=Together Everyone Achieves More

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