



TDCJ Risk Management's Training Circular

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APRIL SPRING IS IN THE AIR



It's here! It is time to get out of the house and enjoy the smell of that fresh cut grass and the cooking BBQ pit. There are so many outdoor activities that we can do during spring months. Springtime is perfect for family gatherings to play baseball, football, picnicking, fishing, camping or just sitting outside watching time fly. While you are enjoying the great outdoors, you may have some company...**BUGS!**



The following information is provided to help protect you, your staff and offenders, family and friends during the bug season.



HOUSE FLIES

Everyone is familiar with the common house hold pest-**THE FLY**. Adult



house flies normally live about two and a half weeks during the summer, but they can survive up to three months at lower temperatures. Flies normally stay within one or two miles of their point of origin, but some have been known to travel as far as twenty miles. Flies can't breed in large numbers if food sources are limited. Don't allow materials such as manure, garbage or other decaying organic matter to accumulate. Keep trash cans clean and tightly covered.

WASPS

These are the most likely insects to cause stinging 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.

TICKS

Spring time is a nice time for a 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 beware 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.

SCORPIONS

This insect not only looks scary, but is scary. 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.

FIRE ANTS

These pesky little critters can turn a nice outdoor



event into a battle. Fire ants bite down into the skin, then sting downwardly as they pivot; the result is a characteristic circular pattern of bites. Fire ant 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.

WEST NILE VIRUS

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 on the unit or around office areas, Contact the Risk Management Central Office (936) 437-4802 immediately for further instructions.



MOSQUITO CONTROL

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



YELLOW JACKETS

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.



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. That is comforting to know. However, only a minute quantity is injected with each bite. The most severe reactions occur in children and older adults. 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 surroundings.

HONEYBEES

Found throughout the United States at anytime of the year, except in colder temperatures where they remain in their hives.



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

AFRICANIZED BEES

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.

SNAKES

Say the word and some people will start running, screaming or getting shivers up and down their spine. People either love them or hate them but either way snakes play an important role in our world. When working outdoors this spring in the garden or working offenders in the field force be aware of your surroundings.



Poisonous Snakes indigenous to Texas include:

Rattlesnake - This snake has a

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. This type of rattlesnake has been known to reach a length of 8.5 feet and eats mice, rats and rabbits.

Cottonmouth - This snake has a 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.

Coral Snake - This snake has a 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.

Copperhead - This snake has a 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.

Copperheads eat small mammals. They may reach a length of 4 feet

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 at work, notify your supervisor immediately.

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