

## **Look Out . . . It's a Snake!**



*At almost all levels of construction activity, we're constantly exposed to hazards created by snakes, spiders, critters, ticks, poison ivy, and allergies . . . all of which can incapacitate you for long periods of time.*

**Certain snakes** can render their victims unconscious within minutes of a bite. People allergic to bee or wasp stings can die within minutes of being stung. On many construction sites, small critters lurk under rocks, rotted timbers, or discarded bricks and in the brush and brambles where workers are clearing, grubbing and grading.

**Wearing leather gloves** is an important defense against these hazards. Bare hands are an open invitation to spiders, bees and wasps. Keep your gloves on at all times while on the jobsite.

**What about snakes?** Yes, there are many nonpoisonous varieties, but unless you can expertly tell the difference between "good" snakes and "bad" snakes, it's wise to assume that all snakes are potentially venomous and, therefore, highly dangerous.

If you or a co-worker gets bitten by a snake (any kind of snake), immediately call 9-1-1. Many times, the 9-1-1 dispatcher will ask if the snake can be captured so that the rescue squad personnel can determine if it is venomous. Identification of the type of snake (or spider) often means the difference between life and death.

**What about those small ticks** we sometimes find in our socks or on our necks? Many ticks throughout the U.S. transmit Lyme disease, a virulent ailment that can paralyze its victims. All tick bites should be checked by a doctor to determine if the tick carried the Lyme disease virus.

Be kind to yourself. If you're stung or bitten by these critters, get to the nearest doctor, clinic or hospital as soon as possible. Your life may depend on it.

- **Sometimes those pretty red berries** or white blossoms on certain trees and shrubs are very, very poisonous. Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac are just a few of the plants that cause agony to people exposed to the leaves, blossoms or berries.
- **For most of us, exposure to these plants** usually results in only a small rash that itches for a day or so and then disappears. But someone highly allergic can develop a rash that spreads all over the body and, in many cases, causes huge blisters. For these highly allergic people, merely inhaling the smoke from a brush pile that contains one of these poisonous plants can cause convulsions or cardiac arrest.
- **What's a good defense** against these pesky leaves and blossoms? Wearing long pants, long sleeve shirts and gloves. Wrap-around safety goggles help keep these poisons out of your tear ducts. And don't forget to take a shower and wash your clothes after possible exposure.
- **Workers with severe allergies** to poison oak, ivy, or sumac must diligently avoid exposure. Once these people are exposed, rashes can quickly infect surrounding tissue, and blisters can rapidly develop. Prescription drugs are the only remedies in such cases to control infection and tissue change.

*A "tick" is extremely small, but it can sometimes create a lethal ailment. And those pesky leaves and blossoms on poison ivy and poison oak plants can be equally lethal, too. Allergies come in all sizes, depending on the amount of exposure.*