**news & notes**

**BUG BOOK**

**Ticks** can transmit Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and other illnesses. If you work in tick-infested areas, check your body for ticks after every shift. They often attach near the hairline, behind the ears, and behind the knees. If you find a tick attached to you, remove it using tweezers, and monitor your health for several weeks. Seek medical attention if you develop a rash, flu-like symptoms, or other unusual symptoms.

Most **spider** bites are harmless, but if you are bitten by a black widow or brown recluse spider, seek immediate medical attention.

**Mosquitoes** transmit many diseases, including the Zika and West Nile viruses. Know the symptoms of the mosquito-borne illnesses in your region, and monitor yourself for these symptoms following a mosquito bite. Be especially aware of mosquitoes during warm weather months; when working around standing water; and in hot, humid climates.

**Bee, hornet, and wasp** stings are painful but generally harmless. If you are allergic to bees and wasps, carry an EpiPen® when working outdoors, and know how to use it.

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**Take the sting out of outdoor work**

**Avoid bites, too**

When working outdoors, you may encounter a variety of insects and arachnids that can bite or sting. These bites and stings can transmit diseases, cause infection, and trigger allergic reactions. Some are also poisonous. Therefore, it is important that you know how to prevent and respond to these encounters while working outdoors.

In most cases, insect, tick, and spider bites will not lead to serious outcomes, but they can be uncomfortable.

If you are bitten or stung, remove the stinger if there is one, treat itching with calamine lotion or hydrocortisone cream, and apply ice to reduce swelling. Monitor yourself for any more serious symptoms, but in most cases, this simple first aid will be sufficient.

Follow these tips for preventing bites and stings when working outdoors:

- **DO** apply a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved insect repellent, and always follow the label directions for safe use. DEET and picaridin are two common, effective repellents.
- **DO** wear clothing treated with permethrin for extra protection. You can use permethrin spray and treat clothing yourself following the package directions or purchase pretreated clothing. Don’t apply permethrin directly to your skin.
- **DO** wear long sleeves, long pants, socks, gloves, and outdoor shoes to cover your skin.
- **DO** tuck your shirt into your pants, and tuck your pant legs into your socks.
- **DO** wear light-colored clothing because it makes insects easier to see.
- **DON’T** wear perfume or cologne when working outdoors because it may attract insects.
The Travelers Companies, Inc. (https://www.travelers.com), the country’s largest workers’ compensation carrier, released its Injury Impact Report, which identifies the most common causes of occupational accidents and injuries.

The company analyzed more than 1.5 million compensation claims filed over a 4-year period from a variety of businesses.

The most frequent causes of workplace injuries were:

1. Material handling—32% of total claims
2. Slips, trips, and falls—16% of total claims
3. Being struck by or colliding with an object—10% of total claims
4. Accidents involving tools—7% of total claims
5. Trauma occurring over time, such as when a body part is injured by overuse or strain—4% of total claims

According to the Lightning Protection Institute (www.lightning.org), lightning associated with thunderstorms and sometimes tornadoes can pose a variety of fire hazards. Lightning’s extreme electrical charge can cause destructive power surges through circuitry, burn holes in gas piping, explode brick and roofing materials, and ignite fires.

Here’s how to stay safe if you’re outdoors when lightning is in the area:

- If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance of lightning. Look for shelter inside a home, large building, or a hard-topped vehicle right away. Do not go under tall trees for shelter. There is no place outside that is safe during a thunderstorm. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder before leaving your shelter.
- If you are in or on open water, go to land and seek shelter immediately.
- If you feel your hair stand on end, that means lightning is about to strike. Squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and put your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible, and minimize contact with the ground. This is a last resort when a building or hard-topped vehicle is not available.
- If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and seek medical care right away. Lightning-strike victims carry no electrical charge, so attend to them immediately. Check their breathing, heartbeat, and pulse. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) may be needed.

Highway work zones are hazardous for motorists who drive through signs, barrels, and lane changes; for workers who build, repair, and maintain roads and bridges; and for emergency responders, cleanup, utility, and demolition personnel. Follow these safety precautions:

1. Stay alert, minimize distractions, and be patient.
2. Dedicate your full attention to the roadway. Avoid changing the radio station, using a mobile phone, eating, or other distractions that can affect your concentration.
3. Keep headlights on.
4. Pay attention to the road. Heed signs and watch brake lights on vehicles ahead. Keep an eye on traffic around you, and be prepared to react.
5. Be mindful of merging. Merge well before you reach the lane closure. And remember that traffic patterns can change daily.
6. Don’t tailgate. Follow other vehicles at a safe distance.
7. Obey the posted speed limit. Workers may be present just feet away. Also be aware that fines may be doubled for moving traffic violations in work zones. Be prepared to slow down further, depending on conditions.
8. Change lanes safely. Change lanes only where pavement markings indicate and only when traffic conditions permit.
9. Follow instructions from flaggers.
10. Expect the unexpected. Workers, work vehicles, or equipment may enter your lane without warning. Also, other vehicles may slow, stop, or change lanes unexpectedly.