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Rodents, Snakes and Insects

Many of us may come across rodents, snakes and insects while working in the field. Sometimes we may not even now that they are there, however we still need to be prepared. Following are a few tips obtained from an OSHA Quick card to help protect us while working in the field.

Insects, Spiders and Ticks

- To protect yourself from biting and stinging insects, wear long pants, socks, and long-sleeved shirts.
- Use insect repellents that contain DEET or Picaridin.
- Treat bites and stings with over-the-counter products that relieve pain and prevent infection.
- Avoid fire ants; their bites are painful and cause blisters.
- Severe reactions to fire ant bites (chest pain, nausea, sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling or slurred speech) require immediate medical treatment.

Rodents and Wild or Stray Animals

- Dead and live animals can spread diseases such as Rat Bite Fever and Rabies.
- Avoid contact with wild or stray animals.
- Avoid contact with rats or rat-contaminated buildings. If you can't avoid contact, wear protective gloves and wash your hands regularly.
- Get rid of dead animals as soon as possible.
- If bitten/scratched, get medical attention immediately.

Snakes

- Watch where you place your hands and feet when removing debris. If possible, don't place your fingers under debris you are moving. Wear heavy gloves.
- If you see a snake, step back and allow it to proceed.
- Wear boots at least 10 inches high.
- Watch for snakes sunning on fallen trees, limbs or other debris.
- A snake's striking distance is about 1/2 the total length of the snake.
- If bitten, note the color and shape of the snake's head to help with treatment.
- Keep bite victims still and calm to slow the spread of venom in case the snake is poisonous. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck out the venom. Apply first aid: lay the person down so that the bite is below the level of the heart, and cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.