

Avoid Hazards in Nature

Construction workers who work outdoors are exposed to a number of natural hazards from bites and stings from ticks, ants, spiders, bees, wasps or other insects, to contact dermatitis from poisonous plants such as poison ivy, oak and sumac. Use the following tips to help protect yourself from these painful natural hazards:

- ✘ Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- ✘ Tuck your pants into your work boots—this will help keep ticks, ants and spiders out.
- ✘ Wear light-colored shirts: They make it easier to see ticks, ants and spiders.
- ✘ Use a tick repellent and spray it near the openings on your clothes, such as the waistband, sleeves, neck and pant cuffs.
- ✘ On your skin, use an insect repellent that contains DEET (N-diethyl-metatoluamide).
- ✘ Avoid wearing strong-smelling after-shaves, colognes and lotions—they can attract insects.
- ✘ Check your body for ticks every day. Deer ticks can carry Lyme disease, a serious disease that can permanently damage your nervous system and joints. If you notice a red “bull’s eye” rash, fever, joint pain or flu-like symptoms after a tick bite, see your doctor immediately.
- ✘ If you come into contact with poison oak, poison ivy, or poison sumac, clean your skin with alcohol within 10 minutes if possible. After 10 minutes, it may not be possible to avoid a rash, but cleansing with alcohol followed by soap may lessen the rash. Use alcohol and water to clean all clothing and equipment which have come in contact with poisonous plants. The oil which causes a rash may stay active on such items for years. If you develop an itchy rash after exposure to a poisonous plant, apply a 1-percent hydrocortisone cream to it and take an antihistamine to relieve the symptoms of the rash.
- ✘ If you suspect you’ve been bitten by a poisonous spider, see a doctor immediately.

