

Tailgate talk

Today's Subject:

Stinging insects

Date: _____

While you might not think stinging insects represent much of a safety hazard, the unfortunate reality is that they do.

Consider: An insect sting in the neck or the mouth can cause swelling that can lead to suffocation. And people allergic to insect stings can suffer a dangerous drop in blood pressure, causing fluid to build up in the lungs and possibly leading to shock.

What to focus on

Here are three things to keep in mind in order to reduce the dangers from stinging insects.

1. Maintain vigilance. If you know you'll be working in an area that could have bee or wasp nests, maintain a sharp lookout for signs of trouble. Watch for patterns of movement – multiple bees or wasps going to and from a specific area.

2. Cover food. Because stinging insects are attracted to food, place caps on bottles and put lids on plastic containers that contain food when eating outdoors.

3. Treat the sting. If you or a coworker is stung, use a fingernail, tweezers, or gauze to remove the stinger and then clean the affected area with soap and water. Apply ice to reduce swelling and don't scratch the skin around the sting.