

SE TX Summer Safety Reminders (May 2024)

Summer presents many hazards that should be considered and planned for. Whether it's the potential hurricanes and floods, heat, new and youth employees, mosquitos, poison ivy, snakes, and lightning, there are many hazards you may need to address as summer arrives. That isn't even considering the off the job hazards of summer such as traveling, food safety, swimming, yard work, and other recreational activities. On the job incidents tend to increase in the summer and ensuring you and your workers are prepared can ensure everyone is safe at the end of the day.



Hurricane Season

Hurricane season starts June 1st. Its important to prepare for any potential severe weather such as hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and any other severe weather or emergency event we could experience. A few resources:

OSHA Hurricane Safety



<https://www.osha.gov/hurricane>

IBHS Business Planning



<https://disastersafety.org/>

NIEHS Disaster Presentations



<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=556>

Heat

Heat presents a serious risk of heat related illnesses. It's important to have a plan on how heat hazards will be managed, train your workers on signs and symptoms of heat related illnesses, and ensure they have water, rest, and shade. Several heat illness prevention resources have been distributed in previous flyers.

OSHA Heat Safety



<https://www.osha.gov/heat/>

OSHA Basic Heat Program Areas



<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3743.pdf>

NIOSH Heat Stress Safety



<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>

Poisonous Plants

Any person working outdoors is at risk of exposure to poisonous plants, such as poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. When in contact with skin, the sap oil (urushiol) of these plants can cause an allergic reaction. Burning these poisonous plants produces smoke that, when inhaled, can cause lung irritation

NIOSH Outdoor Hazards	NIOSH Poisonous Plants (E)	NIOSH Poisonous Plants (Sp)
		
https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/outdoor/	https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-118/pdfs/2010-118.pdf	https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/niosh/docs/2010-118_sp/

Lightning

Since 2009 we've had six workers die from getting struck by lightning in SE TX. It's important for worker to understand what to do when there is potential for lightning in the area. Construction sites can be at a particular risk due to tall exposed structures and equipment such as cranes.

OSHA Lightning Fact Sheet (E)	OSHA Lightning Fact Sheet (Sp)	CDC Lightning Tips
		
https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3863.pdf	https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA4046.pdf	https://www.cdc.gov/lightning/about/index.html

Stinging Insects

Fatalities and hospitalization cases have occurred in SE TX over the years due to bee and insect stings. A worker with an allergic reaction can be in a serious situation and require medical help. Mosquitos may carry the West Nile or Zika virus among other pathogens. Monitor local media for potential outbreaks.

NIOSH Stinging Insects



<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-117/pdfs/2010-117.pdf>

NIOSH Ticks and Mosquitos



<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-119/pdfs/2010-119.pdf>

OSHA West Nile (E)



https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/west_nile_quick_card.pdf

NIOSH Stinging Insects*



<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-117/>

NIOSH Ticks and Mosquitos*



<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-119/>

OSHA West Nile (Sp)



https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/sp_west_nile_gc.pdf

* The NIOSH Webpage can be turned into Spanish for the text version of the Fast Facts cards above

Snakes

Each year, an estimated 7,000–8,000 people are bitten by venomous snakes in the United States, and about 5 of those people die. Workers are far more likely to suffer long-term injuries from snake bites than to die from them. Employers should train their workers about their risk of exposure to venomous snakes, how workers can prevent and protect themselves from snake bites, and what they should do if they are bitten.

OSHA Rodent Snake Insect QC (E/Sp)



https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/rodents_snakes_insects.pdf

TX Parks and Wildlife Snakes



<https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/resources/texas-junior-naturalists/be-nature-safe/venomous-snake-safety>

CDC Snakes



<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/snakes/default.html?msckid=ee962171d14911ec9302d04d19dbdbad>

Summer/Youth Employees

- Young workers are those new to the workforce, even up to age 24. Young workers can be an asset to your workforce. However, it may be their first job or the first time they are operating equipment.
- Understand and comply with the relevant federal and state child labor laws which may prohibit youth from working certain hours and from performing dangerous/hazardous work.
- Ensure that young workers receive training to recognize hazards and are competent in safe work practices. Training should be in a language and vocabulary that workers can understand.
- Remember that young workers are not just "little adults." You must be mindful of the unique aspects of communicating with young workers.
- Tell young workers what to do if they get hurt on the job.
- Implement a mentoring or buddy system for new young workers. Have an adult or experienced young worker answer any questions and help the new young worker learn the ropes of a new job.
- Encourage young workers to ask questions about tasks or procedures that are unclear or not understood. Tell them whom to ask.
- Ensure that equipment operated by young workers is both legal and safe for them to use. Employers should label equipment that young workers are not allowed to operate.
- Many young workers are also temporary workers. Host employers must treat temporary workers as they treat existing workers, especially including adequate training to young temporary workers.



<https://www.osha.gov/young-workers>

CPWR Lightning (E)



https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/publications_TT-Lightning.pdf

CPWR Lyme Disease (E)



https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/CPWR_Lyme_Disease_0.pdf

CPWR Hot Environments (E)



https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/CPWR_Hot_Weather_CPWRlogo_2.pdf

CPWR Lightning (SP)



https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/publications_spanish_TT-SP-Lightning.pdf

CPWR Lyme Disease (SP)



<https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/38-enfermadad-de-lyme.pdf>

CPWR Hot Environments (SP)



<https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/33-ambientes-calientes.pdf>

SE TX Related Incident Examples:

Lightning

- Worker was on a two story apartment complex roof when he got struck by a lightning and fell off the building dying instantly. The deceased was working on the platform of the AC unit
- Employee's placing tarp over structure due approaching storm and end of work day when an one was struck by lightning.
- A 33 year old employee on a power line crew. Work was suspended due to weather and as he was walking back to his truck he was struck by lightning
- Employee was installing metal framing on commercial building under construction and lightning stuck the employee. The employee was taken to the hospital and passed away due to his injuries.
- Employee was walking during his lunch break when lightning struck him and a nearby tree and he later died.
- Employee arrived to work for his night shift during a storm event. He parked his vehicle in the employee parking area, walked through the control gate, proceeded to walk across the property to the building to clock into work. While walking towards the building, he was struck by lightning and collapsed. Fellow employees rushed to his aid, called emergency medical services, and began CPR. He was transported the hospital where he was treated in the ICU for his injuries. He passed away 4 days later.
- Employee was helping to set up a tent for an event and was holding a metal pole. A nearby lightning strike caused a strong electrical current to hit the metal pole and the employee developed pain in his right arm.
- Employee was waiting out a storm in his work truck but had to use a nearby porta potty. While in the porta potty a lightning strike occurred approximately fifty feet from him. He collapsed after coming out of the porta john and suffered a head injury.
- Two employees were working on a barge near a dock receiving steel plates from the pier using a shore crane. During that time a large dark cloud came into view and they were struck by lightning. One employee is in critical condition and the other was sent to the hospital and later discharged.

Severe Weather

- Employees were framing the second floor of residential home under construction when a severe thunderstorm producing hail, rain, and high winds entered the area. The employees took shelter on the first floor of the home to escape the rain and hail. While sheltered, the structure collapsed on top of 9 employees. 911 was called. Two employees were pronounced deceased on scene and seven employees were treated and sent to area hospitals.

Insects, Snakes, and Critters

- The employee was in the process of finishing a job of installing underground cable lines. He was closing a metal wrought iron gate to secure the property. When the gate closed a **wasp** nest was disturbed and the employee was stung on the nose by one wasp. He became dizzy, collapsed, and became unresponsive and later died.
- Employee was bulldozing a fence line that was going to be rebuilt, when he ran into some **bees**, and the bees attacked him. He was hospitalized and later died.
- Employee was mowing property on a z-rider mower and was attacked by **bees**. He ran to the front of the property and was hosed down with water to try and get the bees off. He was stung 30 to 50 times at least. He was given medication and kept overnight for observation.
- Employee was opening a water faucet valve at the facility and was stung by a **wasp** and experienced a severe allergic reaction.
- Maintenance technician was doing grounds clean-up when he stuck his hand inside a bush to retrieve some trash. He suddenly felt a bite on his middle finger, but thought nothing of it as he wasn't in any pain. He woke up the next morning and noticed that his finger was swollen and he could barely move it. He was sent to a medical facility to have his finger treated. A few days later and he was sent to the emergency room because the infection had spread to his arm and he was admitted.
- A temporary employee was stung in the face by several **bees** while he was unloading pallets of tires.

- Employee was inside a guard house reaching for his keys in his left pocket and was stung/bitten on the left ring finger by an unknown **insect** and hospitalized the next morning due to swelling.
- Employee was walking the grounds by the guard shack and was bitten by an unknown insect (suspected **spider**) which caused a severe stinging sensation in his left ring finger which then became discolored and swelled up.
- An employee was bit by a **spider** while watering poinsettias. He killed the spider and continued working. Two days later, he was limping and another employee noticed. They looked at the spider bite and it was blue. He told the employer and they took him to hospital where he was admitted.
- An employee was pulling weeds from a potted plant when a **snake** believed to be a cottonmouth bit her on the hand.
- Employee was placing a lantern on the dock stairs when she was bit several times on the right wrist by a snake, probably was a juvenile copperhead.
- Employee was clearing the water of algae/debris from a site to make a flow measurement, when he felt a slight pain in his left hand. After he started to make the measurement his thumb and hand started to hurt badly and that's when he noticed two small wounds. As he looked for the snakes, he called his supervisor and told him he believed he had been bitten by a snake. Unable to locate the **snake**, he monitored the wound, began to feel nauseous as he finished his measurement. The pain had begun to move up his arm toward his left shoulder. He returned to the office and then went to a clinic. He was given a prescription for an antibiotic to prevent infection. Over the weekend the pain progressed and he went back to the clinic, and during his exam he began to experience paralysis in his arm and fingers, however, the clinic didn't provide additional care. Later he was still experiencing some paralysis in his arm and fingers so his supervisor took him to the hospital. He was initially given IV but later was admitted for additional testing.
- An employee was in the process of loading furniture into a customer's car and was stung by a **bee**. He had an allergic reaction and was hospitalized.
- Employee was bitten by a **spider** and admitted to the hospital for cellulitis.
- Employee was helping to conduct a prescribed burn on the forest. The employee had set his tool down to use the radio and communicate with others on the burn. When he reached down to pick up the tool, a copperhead **snake** hiding in the leaves bit him on the right hand on the index finger.
- Crew of employees were doing a site prep cleaning for an oil drilling rig. While lifting debris from the ground the employee got bit by a cotton mouth **snake**.
- Employee was servicing a residential propane tank and when he reached down to pick up a tool he was bitten by a copperhead **snake**.
- Employee went to get a water meter reading and instead of using the tool (handle with hook) to open the meter he used his hand. When he did this the employee was bitten by a **snake** on the right ring finger.
- Student intern employee was clearing the trail from a downed tree and debris. She was rolling the log out of the way and didn't see the snake. The **snake** bite her on the left index finger. The employee was wearing leather gloves at the time.
- Employee was stung by a **wasp** in his right torso and had an allergic reaction while cleaning tree limbs.
- Employee was working around a flower bed pulling weeds at a recreation center when he was bitten by a **snake** (copperhead) on his right hand/ring finger. He was admitted to the hospital due to severe swelling.
- Employee was doing paperwork at his desk when he felt a sting on his left arm. When he looked at his arm he noticed a bite mark from an insect. He ignored the bite initially but the pain became worse and he decided to go to the hospital at which time he was admitted for treatment for a brown recluse **spider** bite.
- While performing maintenance on a forklift an employee was bitten by a **spider** on his right forearm.

This information has been developed by an OSHA Compliance Assistance Specialist and is intended to assist employers, workers, and others improve workplace health and safety. While we attempt to thoroughly address specific topics [or hazards], it is not possible to include discussion of everything necessary to ensure a healthy and safe working environment in this presentation. This information is a tool for addressing workplace hazards, and is not an exhaustive statement of an employer's legal obligations, which are defined by statute, regulations, and standards. This document does not have the force and effect of law and is not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. It does not create (or diminish) legal obligations under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Finally, OSHA may modify rules and related interpretations in light of new technology, information, or circumstances; to keep apprised of such developments, or to review information on a wide range of occupational safety and health topics, you can visit OSHA's website at www.osha.gov.

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