
Insect and Tick Awareness for Outdoor Sites

1.0 Objective & Intent

The objective of this SOP is to establish mandatory safety protocols to protect all personnel from insect and tick hazards while working at outdoor sites associated with cabinet and millwork operations. This procedure aims to minimize the risk of bites, stings, allergic reactions, and vector-borne diseases such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus. Compliance with WorkSafeBC regulations and the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) framework is required to ensure a safe working environment.

2.0 Operational Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, contractors, and visitors who perform work at outdoor sites, including lumber yards, material storage areas, construction sites, and any off-site locations where cabinet or millwork materials are handled or installed. It covers all personnel involved in site inspections, deliveries, installations, or maintenance activities that require exposure to outdoor environments.

3.0 Hazard Identification & Mandatory PPE

- **Tick Bites:** Ticks can transmit Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and other pathogens. Risk is highest in tall grass, brush, and wooded areas.
- **Insect Stings:** Wasps, bees, hornets, and yellow jackets can cause painful stings and severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).
- **Mosquito Bites:** Mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus and other diseases. Standing water increases risk.
- **Ant Bites:** Fire ants and other species can cause painful bites and allergic reactions.
- **Allergic Reactions:** Some individuals may have severe allergies to insect venom, requiring immediate medical attention.
- **CSA-Approved Steel Toed Boots:** Required for all outdoor work to protect against foot injuries and insect bites.
- **Long-Sleeved Shirt and Long Pants:** Light-coloured clothing to easily spot ticks and insects. Tuck pants into boots.
- **Insect Repellent:** EPA-approved repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus applied to exposed skin.
- **Permethrin-Treated Clothing:** For high-risk areas, treat clothing with permethrin for additional protection.
- **Wide-Brimmed Hat:** Provides protection from sun and insects.
- **Safety Glasses or Goggles:** Protects eyes from flying insects and debris.
- **Work Gloves:** Heavy-duty gloves to prevent insect bites on hands.

4.0 Required Safety Equipment & Tools

- EPA-Approved Insect Repellent (DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus)
- Permethrin Spray for Clothing (if applicable)
- Tick Removal Kit (fine-tipped tweezers, antiseptic wipes, small container for tick storage)
- First Aid Kit (including antihistamines, epinephrine auto-injector if prescribed, and bandages)
- Portable Hand Sanitizer
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as listed in Section 3.0

- Communication Device (cell phone or two-way radio) for emergency contact
- Tick/Insect Awareness Signage (if applicable at site entrance)

5.0 Step-by-Step Safety Procedure

1. Before entering the outdoor site, conduct a pre-work hazard assessment to identify areas with tall grass, brush, standing water, or known insect nests. Notify all personnel of identified hazards and ensure everyone is aware of the location of first aid kits and emergency communication devices.
2. Don all required PPE as listed in Section 3.0. Ensure clothing is light-coloured, long-sleeved, and long-legged. Tuck pants into boots and shirt into pants to create a barrier against insects. Apply EPA-approved insect repellent to all exposed skin, avoiding eyes and mouth. If using permethrin-treated clothing, ensure it has been applied according to manufacturer instructions.
3. Inspect the work area for visible insect nests, such as wasp or hornet nests, ant mounds, or tick habitats. Mark any identified hazards with warning tape or signage and establish a safe perimeter of at least 10 metres. Do not disturb nests; contact a supervisor or pest control professional if removal is required.
4. During work, stay on designated paths or cleared areas. Avoid walking through tall grass, brush, or leaf litter where ticks are commonly found. If crossing such areas is unavoidable, perform a visual check of clothing and exposed skin every 30 minutes for ticks or insects.
5. If an insect sting occurs, immediately move away from the area to avoid additional stings. Remove the stinger by scraping it sideways with a flat edge (e.g., a credit card) to avoid squeezing more venom into the skin. Clean the area with antiseptic and apply a cold pack to reduce swelling. Monitor for signs of an allergic reaction, such as difficulty breathing, hives, or swelling of the face or throat. If symptoms occur, administer epinephrine auto-injector if available and call 911 immediately.
6. If a tick is found attached to the skin, use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick, as this may cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin. After removal, clean the bite area and your hands with antiseptic or soap and water. Place the tick in a sealed container or bag for potential testing. Record the date and location of the bite in the incident log.
7. At the end of the work shift, perform a full body tick check, including under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, and around the waist. Use a mirror or ask a coworker to check hard-to-see areas. Inspect all clothing and gear for ticks. If ticks are found, remove them immediately as per Step 6.
8. After leaving the outdoor site, shower within two hours to wash off any unattached ticks and to perform a more thorough self-check. Wash work clothing in hot water and dry on high heat for at least 10 minutes to kill any remaining ticks. If clothing cannot be washed immediately, store it in a sealed plastic bag until laundering.
9. Report any insect stings or tick bites to the supervisor and complete an incident report within 24 hours. If symptoms of a vector-borne disease (e.g., fever, rash, fatigue, joint pain) develop within 30 days of a tick bite, seek medical attention immediately and inform the healthcare provider of the potential exposure.
10. Document all hazard assessments, PPE inspections, and incident reports in the SafeDesk system. Ensure that all personnel have reviewed and signed off on this SOP before commencing outdoor work. Review and update this procedure annually or after any significant incident.

Regulatory Disclaimer: This document is a generic safety template provided for educational and informational purposes only. It does not constitute professional engineering, legal, or regulatory compliance advice. The end-user assumes all liability for validating all safety protocols against specific machinery manufacturer manuals and local occupational health and safety regulations (e.g., WorkSafeBC, CSA standards) before deployment.