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Sample General Safe Work Practice Exposure to Ticks

Where are ticks found?

Ticks live in tall grass and wooded areas. Ticks are usually active in the months of April through October, and peak in the summer months of June through August. The time of year when ticks are active may vary with the geographic region and climate. Ticks may carry bacteria, parasites, or viruses. Lyme disease is an example of a tick-borne illness.

Am I at risk of being bitten by a tick?

If you work outdoors in areas where it's wooded or there is tall grass, you may be exposed to tick-borne diseases spread from bites of infected ticks.

What should I do if a tick bites me?

The most important thing is to make sure that you remove all of the tick, including the mouth parts that are buried in your skin. Also, do not squeeze the body of the tick when you are removing it. This can force its stomach contents into the wound and increase the chance of infection. If you have been bitten, inform your supervisor. Keep track of any signs and symptoms that may indicate an infection following a tick bite.

How do I remove a tick properly?

Use tweezers or forceps to gently get hold of the tick as close to the skin as possible. Don't touch the tick with your hands. Without squeezing the tick, steadily lift it straight off the skin. Avoid jerking it out. Try to make sure that all of the tick is removed. Once the tick has been removed, clean the bite area with soap and water, then disinfect the wound with antiseptic cream. Wash your hands with soap and water.

What are the signs and symptoms of tick-borne infections?

Symptoms can include, but are not limited to,

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pains
- Fatigue
- Skin rash
- Swollen lymph nodes

Tick-borne infections are more effectively treated if diagnosed early in the course of illness.

Please note: This document is for information purposes only as a guide. The safe job procedures (SJP) and safe work practices (SWP) created for your workplace should reflect your organizations processes, equipment and hazards as identified by a hazard analysis. Construction Safety Nova Scotia does not assume responsibility for the use of information in this document. If assistance is needed to complete a SWP and SJP for your organization please contact CSNS member services at constructionsafetyns.ca or 1.800.971.3888.



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How can I protect myself from tick bites?

- Wear light coloured clothing, tuck your top into your pants, and tuck your pants into your boots or socks.
- Use insect repellent that contains 20–30 percent DEET.
- Take a shower as soon as you can after working outdoors.
- Look for ticks on your body. Ticks are often found on the legs, thighs, back, arms, underarms, groin, behind the ears, and above the hairline.

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