

BITES OR STINGS FROM SNAKES, INSECTS, RODENTS, AND OTHER ANIMALS

Railroad right of ways, switches, derails, equipment and rolling stock can create perfect environments for snakes, insects, rodents and other animals to hide. Railroad workers must always stay alert and use caution to avoid coming into contact with animals that may present a danger.

Stinging/biting insects such as bees, wasps, flies, and spiders can present a danger to humans. Below are a few steps that can be taken to reduce risk:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET or Picaridin
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, socks, and long pants to cover and protect skin
- Wear gloves to operate or reach into equipment that contains cavities or hidden areas that cannot be clearly viewed before handling
- Treat switch stands and equipment with wasp/bug sprays where needed
- Keep right of ways, roadways and walkways clear of vegetation
- Carry lighting to illuminate areas where work is required before reaching in or entering the area
- If bitten by potentially poisonous spider and you feel it is safe to do so, identify the spider that bit you and seek immediate medical attention.

If working in areas where snakes are known or suspected to exist:

- Wear sturdy leather gloves and high-top boots
- Do not place hands or feet into areas that are not clearly uninhabited
- Stay clear of snakes
- If bitten, seek immediate medical attention, and try to note the color and shape of the snake's head
- Research the work environment to see what types of snakes, especially those that may be poisonous, are in the area

Rodents and animals:

- Rodents and animals do not have to be alive to spread diseases such as rat bite fever or rabies
- Workers should make every effort to avoid animals in the wild, especially those that appear ill or disoriented. If animals are sighted that showcase any abnormal symptoms, local wildlife enforcement should be notified