



Safety Alert

Spider Bite

26 March 2021

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by Highways England's supply chain partner:

CHC

Spider Bite

SAFETY ALERT

Background.

CHC were undertaking Culvert works (vegetation clearance) on 18th March which involved using a polesaw to clear vegetation, whilst doing so - the IP reportedly felt a sting on their hand, the IP dismissed the potential sting as a thorn and the injury wasn't treated/reported as the wound appeared minor. In the following days, the wound became infected and the IP was admitted to hospital for treatment where it was suggested that the bite was from a spider.

Bites from spiders in the UK are uncommon, but some native spiders – such as the false widow spider, the cellar spider and the woodlouse spider are able to bite, these leave small puncture marks on the skin, can be painful and cause redness and swelling.

Bites can also become infected or cause a severe allergic reaction in rare cases. Get medical help immediately if you have any severe or worrying symptoms after a spider bite.



Prevention

Some ways to reduce the chance of spider/insect bites are:

- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin – repellents that contain DEET (diethyltoluamide) are most effective.
- Keep your skin covered when working outdoors, ensure PPE is in good condition and provides adequate protection/coverage for works.
- Try not to panic if you encounter spiders, wasps or bees, and back away slowly. Don't wave your arms around or swat at them.
- Avoid using products with strong perfumes, as these can attract insects.

Treatment

Most bites and stings can be treated by:

- Washing the affected area with soap and water.
- Placing a cold compress (a flannel or cloth soaked in cold water) over the area to reduce swelling.
- Raise or elevate the affected area if possible, as this can help reduce swelling.
- Try not to scratch the affected area to avoid infection.

When to get medical advice

Contact your GP or call NHS 111 for advice if:

- You're worried about a bite or sting.
- Your symptoms don't start to improve within a few days or are getting worse.
- A large area (around 10cm or more patch of skin) around the bite becomes red and swollen.
- You have symptoms of a wound infection, such as pus or increasing pain, swelling or redness – you may need antibiotics
- You have symptoms of a more widespread infection, such as a fever, swollen glands and other flu-like symptoms.

Further information: [Insect bites & stings - Injuries & first aid | NHS inform](#)

SHE Advice:

If you require any advice or guidance on any health and safety aspect associated with your work please do not hesitate to contact:
Adam Robinson, SHE Advisor, Area 14, 07778145472.

Circulation:

IBMS, Highways England, etc

Action:

Deliver and record Briefing:
For information:

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