

# Safety Newsletter

May 2012

This Month's Topic: Spiders, Ticks, and Rattlesnakes

## Spider Bites

-In the US, spiders are generally harmless with two exceptions: the black widow and the brown recluse.

-**Black Widows** are shiny and black with a red hourglass marking.

-Symptoms of bites include sharp pain, sweating, nausea, abdominal muscle cramps, difficulty breathing or speaking.

-If bitten, medical attention is required.

-**The Brown Recluse** have small bodies and long legs with a violin shaped marking on the head and back of the brownish or yellowish body.

-Symptoms of bites include severe local reaction usually with an open ulcer appearing in 1 to 2 weeks.

-If bitten, medical attention is required.



## Ticks

-These small, brown parasites have small heads and a body and embed their mouthparts into the skin of a host and feed on blood.

-They do not fly, jump, or drop from trees. Instead they climb to the tips of vegetation and wait for a host to brush against them.

-It is important for PG&E employees working in grassy or wooded areas to wear long-sleeved shirts tucked into pants, and long pants tucked into high socks or boots. Wear light colored clothing so ticks can easily be seen and removed.

-Remove ticks by grasping the tick as close to the wound as possible with fine-tipped tweezers; do not squeeze the body as this may cause the tick to release bacterium into your body.

-Symptoms of tick bites include local infection, and, in rare cases, could lead to the bacterial illness Lyme disease.

## Rattlesnakes

-In Northern California, the Northern Pacific rattlesnake is the only native venomous species. In Southern California, the Western Diamondback is the most common and the most venomous.

-Rattlesnakes are identified by its oval pupils, triangular or arrow shaped head, and skinny neck.

-Rattlesnake bites cause damage by destroying the tissue at the bite and by causing blood-clotting problems. The Mojave rattlesnakes' venom affects the nervous system and can lead to paralysis.

-Prevent rattlesnake bites by wearing boots in areas known to have rattlesnakes. Also, if you see a snake, leave it alone to avoid a bite.

-Never get too close to determine the shape of the pupils of a snake.

*"The best way to avoid injuries from spiders, snakes, and rodents is to do just that-avoid them. If you must enter an area that could be a potential home for any of these creatures pay attention to your surroundings and wear the proper PPE. Christi boxes, vaults, stacks of pipe or other material are great hiding places for any of the above. In regards to rodents, one often overlooked danger is their droppings. If you are working in an area that has rodents present, make sure to wear respiratory protection to avoid diseases like Hanta virus."*

-Zac Leonard, Alisto Construction Manager/Field Technician

Remember...



Be safe and always be aware of your surroundings.

Medical attention is required if bitten by either a Black Widow or Brown Recluse.

Ticks are most active from March through October.

Using the snake's color or pattern is NOT a reliable method of identification.

The rattle of rattle snake may not be present.



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