NIOSH Protect Yourself from Stinging Insects



First aid and prevention against stings from flying insects and fire ants.

Outdoor workers are at risk of being stung by flying insects (bees, wasps, and hornets) and fire ants. While most stings cause only mild discomfort, some may result in severe allergic reactions that require immediate medical care and may cause death.

First Aid

If a worker is stung by a stinging insect:

- Have someone stay with the worker to be sure that they do not have an allergic reaction.
- Wash the site with soap and water.
- Remove the stinger using gauze wiped over the area or by scraping a fingernail over the area – Never squeeze the stinger or use tweezers.
- Apply ice to reduce swelling.
- Do not scratch the sting as this may…