Outdoor-Animal Hazards – Safety Checklist



PREAMBLE

There are a host of problems for workers who work outside and in proximity to all sorts of animals. Some of these animals from spiders, snakes, lions are dangerous and capable of killing workers. Protections, precautions and procedures must be in place to safeguard employees working amidst animals.

Protecting Outdoor Workers from Insects & Wild Animals

Workers who work outside in industries such as construction, mining, forestry, landscaping and park management face safety hazards that indoor workers don't face. For example, outdoor workers are exposed to hazardous insects, such as ticks, and they may be vulnerable to attacks by wild animals, such as bears and wolves. Although insects and wild animals are part of nature, employers still have a duty to protect workers from them when they pose safety risks.

Hazards to Outdoor Workers

Outdoor workers are exposed to many types of hazards that depend on their type of work, geographic region, season, and duration of time they are outside. Employers should train outdoor workers about their workplace hazards, including hazard identification and recommendations for preventing and controlling their exposures.

The first occupation that comes to many peoples' minds when discussing dog bites on the job is postal carriers. Other occupations that are at higher risk of dog bites are cable installers, police officers, package deliverers, and meter readers. With the sheer number of dogs in the US, there are many other occupations exposed to potential dog attacks. It is important to take into consideration the hazards dogs can pose both on and off the job.

Injuries – Dog Attacks

Dog attacks can be as minor as a small single bite to as serious as death. It is estimated that there is 20 to 30 fatalities due to dog attacks every year in the United States. Dogs also carry many bacteria that can be passed on to a human from a bite. The *CDC reports* that a dog's mouths can carry over 60 types of

bacteria and approximately 18% of all dog bites gets infected. While rabies is a common disease, dogs can also carry Pasteurella, MRSA, and Tetanus.

Summary

According to the ASPCA, there are 70 to 80 million dogs as pets in the United States. It is estimated that over 40% of all households have at least one dog. Because of these numbers, the chance of coming into contact with an aggressive dog at some point over your life time is high. Be cautious when around dogs you do not know and especially protect small children from dogs that can potentially attack.

Most safety hazards involve inanimate objects, chemicals or conditions, such as extreme heat. But living creatures can also pose a threat to workers, particularly when they work outside.