

5

Biological Hazards

that may affect

OUTDOOR WORKERS

Be aware of the hazards in your environment. It is important to protect yourself.

1 Ticks

Lyme Disease is caused by the bite of a black legged tick infected with the bacteria.

When you return from outside, check yourself for ticks. Using insect repellent containing DEET provides some protection.

Common symptoms of Lyme Disease are fever, headache, fatigue, and may also include an expanding, red rash at the site of the tick bite.



If you develop symptoms of Lyme Disease, contact your doctor immediately.

For more information, visit www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/lyme.php

2 Wild Parsnip

Exposure to the sap of wild parsnip can cause serious skin reactions (burns) and result in long lasting scars.

Wild Parsnip is found on uncultivated land, roadside ditches, as well as on and around residential properties.

Workers can prevent contact by wearing long clothing and gloves, washing equipment with water immediately after use, and keep water, soap, and eye-wash near work area in case of exposure.



For more information, visit www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/

3 Bat/Bird Droppings

Histoplasmosis is a disease caused by inhaling the spores of a fungus called *Histoplasma capsulatum* which exists in nature in soil and in bird and bat droppings. The infection is usually acquired by inhalation, and the most common type of infection is pulmonary (lung) infection.

Workers who work in close proximity to bird or bat droppings should take steps to minimize the potential for inhaling dust created from dried droppings that could be contaminated.



For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/histoplasmosis/

4 Mosquitos

West Nile virus is most commonly spread by infected mosquitoes.

Most infected people have no symptoms. But others can experience feverish illness and possibly inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) or the lining around the brain (meningitis), both very serious conditions.

Minimize mosquitoes by minimizing mosquito breeding areas like standing water. Preventing bites using clothing and repellents is also important.



For more information, visit <https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/faqs/wnv.php>

5 Stinging Insects

In rare cases, a **severe allergic reaction** can occur after being stung. Employers should be notified if a worker has allergies to insect stings. Co-workers should be trained in emergency first aid, be aware of the signs of a severe reaction, and know how to use the bee sting kit (self-injectable epinephrine).

The best way to prevent stings is to avoid the insects. Do not wear perfumes, colognes, scented soaps, as they contain fragrances that are attractive. Note that insect repellent does not affect these stinging insects.



For more information, visit www.health.gov.on.ca