



# Tailgate Safety Talk

*Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries*

## Outsmart Outdoor Work Risks

**Working outdoors has its rewards but it can present some health risks. If you're aware of the risks and take precautions against them, you can work safely and reap the healthy benefits outdoor work has to offer.**

Working outdoors in the sun and around reflective or hot surfaces and equipment puts workers at risk for overexposure to the sun. Shield the skin from harmful, cancer-causing ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun by wearing light-weight clothing that covers the skin, including a wide-brimmed hat which covers the head, neck, and ears; a long-sleeved shirt; and long pants. And protect the eyes with UV-absorbent sunglasses.

Fifteen minutes before going outdoors, apply a sun screen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher, reapplied periodically and waterproofed if around water or actively perspiring.

Stay hydrated in hot working environments. The body is designed to cool itself by sweating water from its internal system to the skin surface. If more water is removed from the system than is replaced, it could result in heat illness and sometimes even death. When working in hot conditions, drink plenty of water before, during, and after work. The general recommendation is to drink at least one cup of water every 20 minutes.

Watch out for snakes and other biting critters like bees, wasps, spiders, ticks, etc. Immediate attention is required for bitten workers who experience nausea, dizziness, hives, stomach cramps or severe swelling. Wear high-top, heavy boots, gloves, and clothes that cover exposed skin areas. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots. Apply insect repellent containing DEET and avoid cologne, aftershave or perfumed soaps. Watch where you put your hands, where you step, and where you sit, so as not to accidentally disturb a critter's nest or hiding place.

Exposure to certain outdoor plants, such as poison oak, can cause a mild to severe reaction. Certain times of year, even the bare wood or roots can cause a reaction. The best way to deal with nuisance plants is to learn to recognize them and, where possible, avoid them. Protect against skin exposure by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants tied around the ankles, leather gloves with gauntlets, and a wide-brimmed hat and neck scarf. Don't touch any skin, clothing, tools or animals that have come into contact with the plant. And after any outdoor work, shower with a strong soap and wash all clothing in detergent.

*Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.*