



Bee and Wasp Hazards in the Field

Late summer is prime season for bees and wasps, and utility equipment can provide ideal nesting locations. Before opening any enclosure or beginning work, take a few extra seconds to look and listen for insect activity.

Know Where They Hide

Bees and wasps commonly nest in or around:

- Pad-mounted transformers
- Meter pedestals and meter sockets
- Secondary enclosures and switchgear
- Pole cavities and crossarms
- Streetlight bases
- Equipment trailers and service vehicles
- Brush, trees, and vegetation surrounding work sites

Watch for insects flying in and out of openings or listen for the sound of an active nest before approaching equipment.

Reduce Your Risk

- Inspect equipment before opening doors or removing covers.
- Use caution when working around vegetation or reaching into areas you can't see.
- Keep food, drinks, and trash sealed to avoid attracting insects.
- Avoid scented lotions, colognes, or perfumes while working in the field.
- If you discover an active nest, stop work, back away, and notify your supervisor so the hazard can be addressed safely.

If You're Stung

- If stung by a **bee**, remove the stinger as quickly as possible by scraping it away with a fingernail or the edge of a credit card. (Wasps generally do not leave a stinger behind.)
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply a cold pack to reduce pain and swelling.
- Monitor the area for signs of infection or an allergic reaction.

Know the Signs of Anaphylaxis

A severe allergic reaction is a medical emergency. Call **911** immediately if you or a coworker experiences:

- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat
- Widespread hives
- Dizziness, fainting, or confusion
- Rapid pulse or severe weakness

Employees with known insect sting allergies should carry their prescribed epinephrine auto-injector and let coworkers know where it is kept. Some utilities also use hard hat identifiers or other methods to discreetly alert coworkers to severe allergies.

Takeaway: A quick visual inspection before opening equipment can prevent a painful interruption—or a life-threatening emergency. Stay alert, protect yourself, and look out for your crew.