

Health & Safety



Biological Hazards

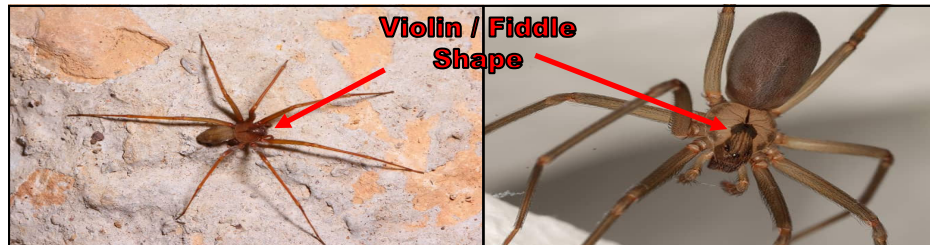
Two of the common types of Venomous Spiders in the Southeastern United States



Black Widows Spiders

Black widow spiders are found throughout North America, but are most common in the Southern and Western United States. They are identified by the pattern of red coloration on the underside of their abdomen. They are usually found in workplaces containing undisturbed areas such as wood piles, under eaves, fences, and other areas where debris has accumulated. They may also be found living in outdoor toilets where flies are plentiful.

Black widow spiders build webs between objects, and bites usually occur when humans come into direct contact with these webs. A bite from a black widow can be distinguished from other insect bites by the two puncture marks it makes in the skin. The venom is a neurotoxin that produces pain at the bite area and then spreads to the chest, abdomen, or the entire body. Although extremely rare, death can occur in the most severe cases.



Brown Recluse Spiders

The brown recluse spider, also known as the violin spider, is most commonly found in the Midwestern and Southern United States. It is brown in color with a characteristic dark violin-shaped (or fiddle-shaped) marking on its head and has six equal-sized eyes (most spiders have eight eyes). Brown recluse spiders are usually found in secluded, dry, sheltered areas such as underneath structures, logs, or in piles of rocks or leaves. If a brown recluse spider wanders indoors, they may be found in dark closets, shoes, or attics.

The brown recluse spider cannot bite humans without some form of counter pressure, through unintentional contact that traps the spider against the skin. Bites may cause a stinging sensation with localized pain. A small white blister usually develops at the site of the bite. The venom of a brown recluse can cause a severe lesion by destroying skin tissue (skin necrosis). This skin lesion will require professional medical attention. If left untreated, severe complications and further injury could occur.

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Ardaman & Associates, Inc.
A Tetra Tech Company



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Poisonous Plants

The old saying "Leaves of three, let it be!" is a helpful reminder for identifying poison ivy and oak, but not poison sumac which usually has clusters of 7-13 leaves. Even poison ivy and poison oak may have more than three leaves and their form may vary greatly depending upon the exact species encountered, the local environment, and the season. Being able to identify local varieties of these poisonous plants throughout the seasons and differentiating them from common nonpoisonous look-alikes are the major keys to avoiding exposure.

Poison Ivy



- Poison Ivy always has leaves of three with almond-shaped leaflets
- It always grows left then right, with shoots off its branches
- It never has thorns

Poison Oak

- Typically a shrub with leaves of three
- It always grows left then right, with shoots off its branches
- May have yellow or green flowers and clusters of fuzzy berries



Poison Sumac

- Woody shrub that has stems that contain 7-13 leaves arranged in pairs
- The leaves are not saw-toothed and the stems are red



Symptoms of poison ivy, oak, and sumac

Signs or symptoms associated with dermal contact with poisonous plants may include:

- Red rash within a few days of contact
- Possible bumps, patches, streaking, or weeping blisters (blister fluids are not contagious)
- Swelling
- Itching

Prevention

Workers can prevent contact with poisonous plants by taking these steps:

- Wear long sleeves, long pants, boots, and gloves.
- Wash exposed clothing separately in hot water with detergent.
- Barrier skin creams, such as a lotion containing denotatum, may offer some protection before contact.
- Barrier creams should be washed off and reapplied twice a day.

(continued page 3)

Spiders Continued.....

Workers should take the following preventive steps:

- Inspect or shake out any clothing, shoes, towels, or equipment before use.
- Wear protective clothing such as a long-sleeved shirt and long pants, hat, gloves, and boots when handling stacked or undisturbed piles of materials. Minimize the empty spaces between stacked materials.
- Inspect manhole covers, piezometers, and other outdoor areas prior to accessing them.
- Remove and reduce debris and rubble from outdoor work areas.
- Trim or eliminate tall grasses from work areas.
- Store apparel and outdoor equipment in tightly closed plastic bags.
- Keep your tetanus booster up-to-date (every 10 years). Spider bites can become infected with tetanus spores.

Spider Bite First Aid:

Workers should take the following steps if they are bitten by a spider:

- Stay calm. Identify the type of spider if it is possible to do so safely. Identification will aid in medical treatment.
- Wash the bite area with soap and water.
- Apply a cloth dampened with cold water or filled with ice to the bite area to reduce swelling.
- Elevate bite area if possible.
- Immediately seek professional medical attention for Black Widow and Brown Recluse bites.
- Do not attempt to remove venom.
- Notify your supervisor.



Bee and Wasp Prevention

- To keep bees away, wear light-colored clothing and avoid scented soaps and perfumes. Don't leave food, drinks, and garbage uncovered. Practice good hygiene, they are attracted to sweat, and body odors.
- If you encounter a swarm, run as quickly as you can in a straight line away from the bees. Do not flail or swing your arms at them, as this may further annoy them. Get to the closest house or car as quickly as possible. Don't worry if a few bees become trapped in your home. If several bees follow you into your car, drive about a quarter of a mile with the window down and let the bees out.
- Because bees target the head and eyes, cover your head as much as you can without slowing your escape.
- Avoid excessive motion when near a colony. Bees are much more likely to respond to an object in motion than a stationary one.
- If no shelter is available, keep running. African honey bees can follow you for as far as a quarter of a mile. If you run far enough, you should be able to lose them.
- Whatever you do, don't stay still if the bees are stinging you. These aren't grizzly bears; they will not stop if you "play dead."
- Don't jump into a pool or other body of water to avoid the bees. They can and will wait for you to surface, and will sting you as soon as you do. You can't hold your breath long enough to wait them out.
- If someone else is being stung by killer bees and cannot run away, cover them with anything you can find. Do what you can to quickly cover any exposed skin or susceptible areas of their body, and then run for help as fast as you can.

First Aid Treatment for Stings:

- If you are stung just once or a few times, carefully monitor yourself for any unusual reactions. Wash the sting sites with soap and water to avoid infections. Use ice packs to reduce swelling and pain. Of course, if you are allergic to bee or wasp venom, seek medical attention immediately.
- Do not pull the stinger out with your fingers or tweezers because this will squeeze out more venom. Instead, scrape the stinger out with your fingernail, the edge of a credit card, a dull knife blade, or other straight edged object.
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) should be given to decrease minimal allergic reactions if an individual is not allergic to Benadryl.
- If a severe allergic reaction occurs, you must transport immediately to a local emergency room.

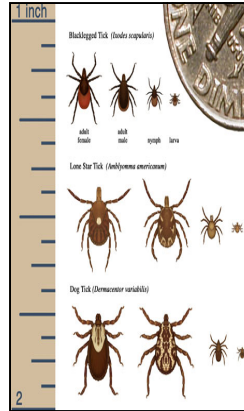
Ticks

Ticks live in moist and humid environments, particularly in or near wooded or grassy areas. You may come into contact with ticks during outdoor activities around your home or when walking through leaf litter or near shrubs. Always walk in the center of trails in order to avoid contact with ticks. Tick bites can lead to Lyme disease, although it is rare. Check your clothing for ticks. Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing. Clothing should be examined carefully, and any ticks that are found should be removed.

Fortunately the risk for ticks carrying Lyme disease in the southeastern United States is very rare.

Tick Prevention:

- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing, including long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into boots or socks.
- Use insect repellents that provide protection for the amount of time you will be outdoors:
 - Follow repellent label directions for use.
 - Use repellents containing 20%-30% DEET on your exposed skin and clothing to prevent tick bites.
 - Reapply repellents as needed.
- Use repellents such as Permethrin for greater protection.
 - Permethrin kills ticks on contact.
 - Permethrin can be used on clothing but should not be used on skin. One application of permethrin to pants, socks, and shoes typically stays effective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and remains protective for many (up to 70) washings.
 - Check your skin and clothes for ticks every day. The immature forms of these ticks are very small and may be hard to see.



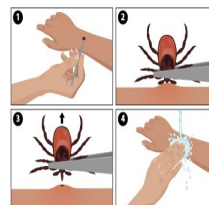
Tick Removal:

Remove the tick promptly and properly:

- Shower or bathe as soon as possible after working outdoors to wash off and check for ticks.
- Remember to check your hair, underarms, and groin for ticks.
- Immediately remove ticks from your body using fine-tipped tweezers or Tick Me Off tool. Ticks can attach to any part of the human body but are often found in hard-to-see areas such as the groin, armpits, and scalp. In most cases, the tick must be attached for 36-48 hours or more before the Lyme disease bacterium can be transmitted. Lyme disease is very uncommon in the Southern United States. The blacklegged tick (or deer tick) spreads the disease in the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and north-central United States, and the western blacklegged tick spreads the disease on the Pacific Coast.
- Grasp the tick firmly and as close to your skin as possible and pull the tick's body away from your skin with a steady motion.
- Clean the area with soap and water.
- Removing infected ticks within 24 hours reduces your risk of being infected with the Lyme disease bacterium.
- Place clothes in a hot dryer to kill any ticks present and run the dryer on high heat for a minimum of 10 minutes. It's not the heat that kills them. It's the dryness. Ticks require moisture to survive and will rapidly desiccate and die in dry conditions—and a quick spin in the dryer is all that's needed to crisp them up death. (Ticks can actually survive a hot-water run through the washing machine.)
- While removing a tick, if the tick's mouthparts break off and remain in your skin, don't worry. The mouthparts alone cannot transmit Lyme disease, because the infective body of the tick is no longer attached. The mouthparts can be left alone. They will dry up and fall out by themselves in a few days, or you can remove them as you would a splinter.

When trying to remove the tick:

- **DO NOT** touch the tick with your bare hands wear nitrile gloves.
- **DO NOT** squeeze the body of the tick as this may increase your risk of infection.
- **DO NOT** put alcohol, nail polish remover or Vaseline on the tick.
- **DO NOT** put a hot match or cigarette on the tick in an effort to make it "back out."
- **DO NOT** use your fingers to remove the tick.



These methods do not work and only increase the likelihood the tick will transmit Lyme disease to you. Applying alcohol, nail polish remover, or a hot match can irritate a tick and cause it to regurgitate its gut contents into your skin. The gut contents of a tick can contain the Lyme disease-causing bacterium.

Poisonous Plants Continued....

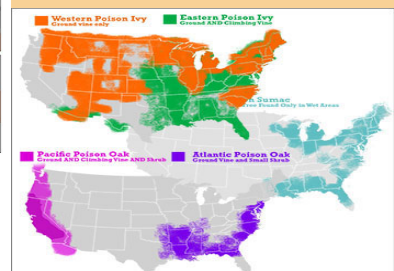
Prevention continued:

- After use, clean tools with rubbing alcohol (isopropanol or isopropyl alcohol) or soap and lots of water as urushiol from the poisonous plants can remain active on the surface of objects for up to 5 years.
- Wear nitrile gloves during this process.
- Do not burn plants that may be poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac. Inhaling smoke from burning plants can cause severe allergic respiratory problems.

First Aid

Workers who have come in contact with poisonous plants should:

- **Immediately rinse skin with rubbing alcohol, specialized poison plant washes, degreasing soap (such as dishwashing soap) or detergent, and lots of water.**
- **Rinse frequently so that wash solutions do not dry on the skin and further spread the urushiol.**
- **Scrub under nails with a brush.**
- **Apply wet compresses, calamine lotion, or hydrocortisone cream to the skin to reduce itching and blistering.**
- Follow the directions on any creams and lotions. Do not apply to broken skin, such as open blisters.
- Oatmeal baths may relieve itching.
- An antihistamine such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) can be taken to help relieve itching.
- Follow directions on the package, drowsiness may occur from antihistamine.
- If children come in contact with work clothing contaminated with urushiol, a pediatrician should be contacted to determine appropriate dosage.
- In severe cases or if the rash is on the face or genitals, seek professional medical attention.
- Call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room if suffering a severe allergic reaction, such as swelling or difficulty breathing, or you have had a severe reaction in the past.



What do the southeastern poisonous snakes look like?



Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake



Canebrake Rattlesnake



Pygmy Rattlesnake



Cottonmouth/Water Moccasin Snake



Copperhead Snake



Coral Snake

Poisonous Snake Safety

Snake Safety Tips:

You should not pick up snakes of any kind even if you believe them to be harmless. You should wear gloves when working in heavy vegetation or collecting samples. You should never walk barefoot outside, always wear your safety boots, and snake gaiters to protect your legs.

You should never put your hands in holes or where you cannot see clearly. You should never play with or scare other people with a snake, whether it is living or dead. You should turn over all trash or logs before picking them up. Likewise, you should brush off bark before sitting on a log, stump, or anything close to the ground. If a snake crawls on you or is close by, you should sit perfectly still.

You should also use caution when boating under

low hanging limbs and branches.

If you suffer a snake bite, you should remain calm. Do not try to pick up or capture the snake. You should seek help immediately. You or someone else should immediately call 911 and stay on the phone with the 911 operator. Identification of the type of snake that bit you is helpful, but not necessary.

Keep in mind that you have to go to the snake; the snake will never come to you to bite you. Most snake bites can be completely avoided

by following the few simple tips above. Be sure to practice snake safety, and memorize these life saving snake bite tips.

Hotline Numbers: Poison Control Hotline

1-800-222-1222

Southeastern Poisonous Snakes

The **Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake** is the largest and most dangerous of Florida's, Louisiana's, and Texas's native snakes. It also ranks high on the list of poisonous snakes of the world. Its large body size, quantity of venom, aggressive defensive tactics and tremendous striking speed make this snake one to be treated with extreme caution. Although it may attain a body length of over eight feet, it is rare to find a rattler over seven feet long. Rattlesnakes feed on small warm-blooded animals, mainly rabbits, squirrels, rats, mice, shrews, and occasionally birds. When disturbed, the rattler assumes a defensive position with the body coiled upon itself, with the head and neck raised in an S-position. From this stance, the rattler can deliver its venomous strike. It almost always gives a warning rattle of the tail first. The Eastern Diamondback occurs in every Florida County, Louisiana Parish, and Texas County and in many habitats. Average adult size is 36-72 inches

The **Canebrake Rattlesnake**, also called the Timber Rattlesnake, is restricted mainly to northern Florida but has been reported as far south as Alachua County. This snake is the southern subspecies of the timber rattlesnake found in other portions of the United States. As with other rattlesnakes, the head is much wider than the neck. It is more slender in build than the average diamondback. Florida specimens seldom measure more than five feet in length. Usually found in the flat woods, river bottoms and hammocks, the canebrake also occurs in abandoned fields and around farms. Average adult size is 36-60 inches.

The **Pygmy Rattlesnake**, also called ground rattler, is common throughout Florida and Louisiana. It is found in every county/parish. Its rattle is small and slender and produces a sound like the buzzing of an insect, which may be difficult to hear. Most pygmy rattlers measure less than 18 inches in length. It feeds on small frogs, lizards, mice and other snakes. The Pygmy has a feisty disposition, and is quick to strike. Luckily, it usually does not inject enough venom to kill an adult human. Average adult size is 12-24 inches,

The **Cottonmouth or Water Moccasin** is a pit viper without rattles. It occurs commonly in every county/parish of FL, TX, and LA. Often when disturbed it draws into a loose coil, cocks its head upwards and opens its mouth wide to reveal the whitish interior lining, hence the name cottonmouth. It does not have to be coiled to strike, but can deliver a bite from almost any position, either in or out of the water. It is an unpredictable snake. Some snakes are calm and

sluggish while others may be very aggressive. A water snake, the cottonmouth is found along stream banks, in swamps, margins of lakes and in tree-bordered marshes. It hunts at night for its prey of fish, frogs and other snakes, lizards and small mammals. The poisonous bite of this reptile results in great pain and severe swelling. With immediate and proper medical treatment, the bite is only occasionally fatal to humans. Average adult size is 20-48 inches.

Copperheads are found in Florida's panhandle, and throughout Louisiana and Texas. Many snakes that are reported to be copperheads turn out to be young Brown or Banded Water Snakes, which can also be mistaken for copperheads. The copper-colored head is wider than the neck. Average adult size is 22-36 inches.

The **Coral Snake's** venom is the most potent of any of North America's snakes. It has short fangs and a small mouth. It does not strike like the pit vipers but bites and chews to inject its poison. Many people use this rhyme "red touch yellow, kill a fellow; red touch black, okay Jack." to differentiate the Coral Snake from non-venomous copycats like the Scarlet King Snake. It occurs throughout Florida, Texas, and Louisiana, primarily in heavy brush. Average adult size is 20-30 inches.



❌ DON'T	✅ DO
Take the patient to a tantrik or a snake charmer for treatment	Immobilize the affected limb
Suck the wound	Apply basic first aid (wash the wound with soap & water)
Cut the wound open	Rush the patient to the nearest hospital that can deliver Tetanus Toxoid, Anti-venom and emergency care
Tie ligatures around the wound	
Burn the wound	
Apply herbal pastes over the wound	

Ardaman Update



Injury Incidents:

- The employee was performing concrete testing. They went to lift a 5-gallon bucket while pivoting from their waist and felt discomfort in their lower back. Remember to always use proper body mechanics, bend at your hip and knees, not your waist, keep your natural back curve, and tighten your abdominal muscles. First Aid Only (Ft. Myers)

Vehicle and Equipment Incidents:

- The employee was traveling on the interstate in the far-left lane. There was heavy traffic, and the vehicle on their right in the middle lane started merging without warning. The tail end of the other truck struck the passenger front side of our vehicle. When changing lanes, always check your mirrors and blind spots, signal early to indicate your intentions, and make sure there is enough space between your vehicle and surrounding traffic. (Orlando)
- The employee was trying to go around a tractor on the highway. They started to go around the tractor when they quickly realized another vehicle was coming from the opposite direction. Our driver hit the brakes and moved back into their lane and was then struck from behind by the vehicle behind them. Only pass if it is legal and safe to do so. Make sure the road ahead is clear, check your mirrors and blind spots, signal your intention, move into the opposing lane only when there is enough distance and visibility to safely see if vehicles are ahead. Do not pass when approaching curves, hills, intersections, railroad crossings, or where pavement markings or signs prohibit passing. (Orlando)
- The employee was on the job site and locked their keys in the truck. The employee tried to pry the top of the driver side window and cracked the window. If you lock your keys in a vehicle, check all doors and compartments to see if you can gain access first. Use a spare key if available by contacting your branch, use the manufacturer's app if available on newer vehicles, or contact the site supervisor to see if a locksmith is available on site. If they are not available, call roadside assistance, the fleet service program, or contact a locksmith to have them unlock the vehicle safely. (Orlando)

DON'T DRIVE AGGRESSIVELY

Driving on busy, crowded roadways can be stressful. However, aggressive driving is never the answer. The Department of Motor Vehicles defines aggressive driving as "the act of operating a motor vehicle in a selfish, bold or pushy manner, without regard for the rights or safety of others." Here are some safety tips on how to avoid it:

- If you're feeling stressed or irritated before heading out, try to relax first.
- Give the roadway your full attention, and don't let yourself be distracted.
 - ◇ Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in your vehicle, fiddling with the stereo, entertainment or navigation system—anything that takes your attention away from the task of safe driving.
 - ◇ Ardaman requires the use of hands free devices when operating company vehicles.
- Try to give other motorists the benefit of the doubt.
- Refrain from driving slowly in the left lane. The left lane is only for passing.
- Remember that how another person is driving has nothing to do with you. Don't take other people's behaviors personally.
- Give yourself plenty of time for traveling and factor in delays, such as bad weather, traffic, or road construction.
- Know that you may be delayed. Take a deep breath and accept it. It is better to arrive late, than to never arrive at all.
- Slow down as conditions warrant, and keep a safe following distance. (4 second following distance per the Smith System)
- Never make gestures with your hands – keep them on the steering wheel. "Avoid making any gestures that might anger another driver, even seemingly harmless expressions of irritation like shanking your head."
- If another driver is determined to get in front of you, let them do so. This response will become easy for you and you won't be as offended by the actions of others.

If you are confronted by an aggressive driver, make every reasonable effort to get out of the person's way. Never challenge the other driver by speeding up or attempting to block the person's vehicle. Refrain from making contact and ignore any gestures the driver may make.

Near Miss / Hazard Identification

Highlighted Near Miss/ Hazard Identifications from 35 reports received from the month of July.

- An employee observed coworkers who were getting ready to transport boxes that contained soil samples in glass jars. The boxes were in poor condition and when one of the individuals lifted the box, the bottom of the box broke, but they were able to set it back down quickly before the samples fell to the ground and the jars broke. Always inspect materials before moving them. Cardboard boxes may deteriorate or tape may weaken over time. Always inspect the integrity of the boxes before moving them. (Orlando)

Ardaman Safety Audits

Identified Hazards from Loss Prevention Observation/ Safety Audits conducted in the month of July:

- **Ergonomics:** Employee was sitting on the edge of work-station chair with feet crossed. Poor ergonomics may lead to pain/injury to the neck and back areas. Always sit properly in a chair with feet flat on the floor.

Ardaman Health and Safety Recognition Awards



The safety committee reviewed all of the near miss and hazard identification submittals for the month. All of the submittals were placed into a random lottery Pool. The following individuals were selected at random for a \$25.00 gift card.

July Lottery Winners:

Everett Leslie: New Orleans
Tonya Erbland: Tampa

A Safety Sticker was awarded to the following individuals:

- **Trevor McGee** for recognition and actions regarding borehole that needed to be left open for additional observation. The employee marked the hole to ensure others were aware. A gift card was also awarded to Trevor. (Baton Rouge)
- **Ron Perry** for recognition and actions taken regarding a man-hole cover that was left open at a gas station exposing others to a fall hazard. The employee marked the hazard and alerted the general manager. A gift card was also awarded to Ron. (New Orleans)
- **Charles Alday** for recognition and actions taken during the daily required DOT inspection. The employee observed a deficiency on the vehicle and notified their supervisor to have it corrected. A gift card was also rewarded to Charles. (Tallahassee)
- **Alex Woodward** for recognition and actions take due to a trip hazard on a job site. The employee observed the hazard and immediately removed it from the area. A gift card was also awarded to Alex. (Shreveport)

August 2026 Safety Quiz

Please circle the letter of the answer that fits best. Some answers can be found in the newsletter

1. When should you first inspect yourself or your coworker for ticks after a field visit?
A. After getting back to the office B. When you get home C. Before getting into the vehicle at the jobsite
D. Never
2. Rattler Snakes, Cotton Mouth/Water Moccasin, Copperhead, and, Coral Snakes are the most commonly occurring venomous snakes in Louisiana, Texas, and Florida.
A. True B. False
3. What color combination in sequence does a venomous Coral Snakes have?
A. Red/Black B. Red/Yellow C. Red/Brown D. Brown/Black
4. Which specific characteristic helps identify a Brown Recluse spider?
A. Color B. Size C. Violin shape on top D. All the above
5. Black Widows usually have a red hourglass shape on the underside of their abdomen.
A. True B. False
6. You should never squeeze the body of a tick while removing it from the body.
A. False B. True
7. Wearing lighter color long pants, long sleeves, gloves, and covering your head when working in heavy vegetation is a good form of protection from insects and poisonous plants.
A. True B. False
8. Which types of plants should Ardaman workers avoid?
A. Poison Ivy B. Poison Oak C. Poison Sumac D. All the above
9. What should you do immediately if you get Urushiol from a poisonous plant on your skin?
A. Rinse your skin with soap and water B. Rinse your skin with rubbing alcohol
C. Wash skin with special plant washes D. All the above
10. If you feel thirsty while working in the heat, you are already displaying signs of heat exhaustion.
A. True B. False
11. Before grabbing tools and equipment that have been stored outdoors, you should inspect and shake/wipe them off prior to use while checking for any insects or other biological hazards.
A. False B. True
12. When removing a tick from the skin, always grab the tick as close to the skin as possible using tweezers or the tick me off tool, never use your fingers or a match.
A. True B. False
13. How many inches must you move away from the outer marked location of a utility to be outside of the tolerance zone (safe area to dig/drill) per 811 ?
A. 8 inches B. 12 inches C. 18 inches D. > 24 inches

All Ardaman employees must complete the quiz and turn it into their H&S coordinator by the end of each month. For those individuals who cannot attend the monthly safety meeting, please complete the quiz and submit it to your supervisor for approval. All completed quizzes must be submitted at a designated location at each office. The supervisor only needs to sign the quiz if you are unable to attend the monthly safety meeting. Please provide a reason for your absence in the box below:

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Employee Print Name	Employee Sign Name	Date
Supervisor Print Name	Supervisor Sign Name	Date