Mosquitos, Tick and Vector Born – Landscaping Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Working outdoors in landscaping exposes workers to various insects, including mosquitos and ticks, which can transmit serious vector-borne diseases. Understanding the risks and taking preventive measures can significantly reduce the chances of contracting these diseases.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Mosquitos and ticks are prevalent in many outdoor environments. They can transmit diseases such as Lyme disease, West Nile virus, and Zika virus. Symptoms of these diseases range from mild flu-like symptoms to severe neurological issues or even death. Workers in landscaping are at higher risk due to prolonged exposure in these environments.

Specific Risks:

- **Mosquitos**
  - Breed in stagnant water and can be highly prevalent in areas with poor drainage or standing water.
  - Active mostly during dawn and dusk, increasing the risk of bites during these times.
- **Ticks**
  - Found in wooded, grassy, or brushy areas. Can attach to skin and feed on blood, transmitting diseases.
  - Ticks are small and can be difficult to detect, often going unnoticed until they have already attached and started feeding.

Diseases Transmitted by Mosquitos and Ticks

- **Lyme Disease:** Transmitted by black-legged ticks, causes

symptoms like fever, headache, fatigue, and a characteristic skin rash called erythema migrans.
- **West Nile Virus:** Spread by mosquitos, can lead to diseases such as encephalitis or meningitis.
- **Zika Virus:** Transmitted by Aedes mosquitos, linked to birth defects and neurological complications.
- **Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever:** Spread by ticks, can be fatal if not treated early, causes fever and rash.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Personal Protective Measures

- **Clothing**
  - Wear light-colored clothing to spot ticks more easily.
  - Long-sleeved shirts and long pants provide a physical barrier against bites.
  - Tuck pants into socks and shirts into pants to prevent ticks from reaching your skin.
- **Repellents**
  - Use insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin and clothing.

Worksite Precautions

- **Mosquito Control**
  - Eliminate standing water in containers, flowerpots, and gutters to reduce mosquito breeding grounds.
  - Use larvicides in standing water that cannot be removed.
- **Tick Control**
  - Keep grass and brush trimmed around work areas.
  - Create a barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration.

Regular Checks and Hygiene

- **Tick Checks**
  - Perform full-body tick checks using a mirror or partner to inspect hard-to-see areas.

    - Remove ticks promptly with fine-tipped tweezers by grasping the tick close to the skin’s surface.
- **Showering and Laundering**
    - Shower soon after being outdoors to wash off any unattached ticks.
    - Wash and dry work clothes on high heat to kill any ticks that may be present.

Additional Measures

1. **Vaccinations and Prophylactic Treatments**

    - **Lyme Disease Vaccine**: Vaccines for pets can help reduce the overall tick population.
    - **Prophylactic Antibiotics:** In some cases, doctors may prescribe a single dose of doxycycline as a preventive measure if a tick bite is detected early, and the tick is believed to be a carrier of Lyme disease.

1. **Worksite Education and Training**

    - **Awareness Programs:** Conduct regular training sessions to educate workers about the risks and preventive measures related to mosquito and tick exposure.
    - **Signage and Reminders:** Use signs and reminders around the worksite to encourage regular use of repellents and adherence to protective measures.

1. **Environmental Controls**

    - **Mosquito-Repellent Plants:** Incorporate plants like citronella, marigold, and lavender in landscaping.
    - **Tick-Repellent Landscaping:** Implement landscaping practices that reduce tick habitats, such as keeping lawns well-manicured and using mulch or gravel in frequently used areas.

FINAL WORD

By taking personal precautions and maintaining a clean work environment, you can significantly reduce your risk. Stay vigilant

and proactive in applying these protective measures to ensure a safe and healthy work experience in landscaping.