

Forest Industry Safety Alert

Tick Season - Reminder

Location: Sechelt, B.C.

Date: June 21, 2017

Details of Close Call:

A new worker discovered an attached tick on their abdomen while showering at the end of a day of engineering fieldwork. Tick awareness and checking for ticks had been covered during a pre-work safety meeting at the beginning of the shift and the worker was wearing long sleeved shirt and long pants but routine daily inspections were not being done as no tick activity had been observed up to that point. The tick was immediately removed and discarded. There have been no symptoms of infection.

Learnings and Suggestions:

The Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation and BC Centre for Disease Control websites provide information and updates on the status of Lyme Disease in British Columbia.

- A 2013 CDC Lyme Disease Risk Map for British Columbia indicates that the Lower Mainland, Sunshine Coast, and East Coast of Vancouver Island as well as southern interior valleys have optimum ecological conditions for the Lyme Disease organism to be present in the environment.
- A November 2016 warning indicates that 2 of 3 ticks that tested positive for Lyme Disease in BC in 2016 came from the lower mainland (the other came from the Kamloops area).
- A June 2017 bulletin indicates a new strain of Lyme Disease has been discovered on Vancouver Island.

The June 2016 Safety Alert of the Month (AOM # 2016-06-22) was reviewed at a safety meeting to refresh awareness and review procedures. The safety alert provides guidance on preventing tick bites:

- minimise exposed skin, tucking in clothing, using insect repellent
- perform thorough daily body checks as well as gear checks for stow away ticks.

It also provides guidance for safe tick removal and information about Lyme Disease including:

- prompt removal within 24-36 hours of bite to reduce potential for infection
- retain tick in a crush proof container. Take live tick to your doctor ASAP for testing or retain in fridge for a couple weeks in case you experience symptoms.

Additionally, company safety procedures have been updated to include a requirement that all tick bites be reported using an incident report form for internal record keeping purposes. It was also recommended that ticks involved in bites be retained for a few weeks in case of symptoms or forwarded for testing through a doctor.

For more information on this submitted alert:

Len Apedaile RPF, Econ Consulting, 250 337-5588, email: len@econ.ca