



004: Animal Encounters

Basic facts

Most animals are scared, and will not harm you if you give them an escape route. In new construction, an animal may return to where its home was only weeks ago.

Insects

Do not agitate a beehive, wasp nest, or hornet's nest. Contact your foreman to have a trained and properly equipped person remove these.

If you are encountering mosquitoes, look for standing water in barrels or other manmade objects, and get rid of it. If the standing water is on natural land, ask your foreman to get permission to drain it.

Report indoor insect infestations to your foreman.

Rodents

Rodents are generally harmful. They carry disease, and they destroy infrastructure.

Do not handle rodents.

Report the presence of rodents to your foreman, so traps may be set.

Snakes

Very few snakes are capable of appreciably hurting humans.

Give a snake a wide berth, and it will leave you alone. If a snake is occupying a cable tray or other area you need access to, do not attempt to remove the snake. A snake will usually leave on its own, if left alone. However, you should report it to animal control to ensure it and other snakes are vacated from the area.

Birds and mammals, generally

Never touch a baby bird or the babies of other animals. Doing so endangers you, as the mother may attack. It also marks the baby with your scent, which may endanger the baby.

If you encounter a wild animal, speak softly to it and back away from it. Do not make sudden moves.

If you simply see a wild animal, don't approach it. Going toward the animal, no matter what your intentions, can easily be interpreted as an aggressive action.

Never approach a Canadian goose that is sitting down. This is likely a mother on her eggs. The gander is capable of driving his beak through your skull. The gander's wingspan can exceed five feet, and he can easily destroy your eyes with one stroke.

Feral cats and wild dogs

These are generally harmless if you don't approach them, and they reduce vermin.

Do not attempt to pet these animals. They do not trust humans, and they will bite.

If a cat, dog, skunk, raccoon, or other animal advances on you, it may be rabid. Look for foaming at the mouth, glassy eyes, or staggering. Report it to animal control.

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Locate the phone number for the local animal control authority.

What this Safety Talk covers:

What to do when encountering animals on job sites.

Discussion notes :

