



STANDARD BITES AND STINGS

Published:

JUNE 2024



CONTENTS

1	Purpose	3
2	Objectives	3
3	Scope	3
4	Definitions	3
5	Roles and Responsibilities	5
6	General Requirements	5
6.1	What is a bite?	5
6.2	What is a sting?	5
7	Key Elements – Managing the Risks Associated with Bites and Stings	5
7.1	Ticks	5
7.2	Snakes	5
7.2.1	How to Reduce the Risk of Snake Bites	5
7.2.2	How to Reduce the Risk of Snake Bites	6
7.3	Mosquitos, Wasps and other flying insects	6
7.3.1	How to Reduce the Likelihood of Being Stung	6
7.4	Dogs/Aggressive animals	6
7.4.1	How to Reduce the Likelihood of Being Attached by a Dog/Aggressive Animal	6
7.4.2	How to Response to a Dog Attack/Aggressive Animal	6
7.5	Spiders	7
7.5.1	Funnel Web/Mouse Spider	7
7.5.2	Red-back or Other Spider Bites	7
8	Training	7
9	Monitoring and Review	7
10	Related Documents	7
11	Associated Regulations and Standards	8



DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Version history

Document review date is as per the Integrated Management System Standard ([HW2013-421/22.002](#)).

Version	Author	Changes	Approved By	Date Approved
1	Erin Hardman – WHS Advisor	Original Release	Peter Kembrey – Executive Manager Corporate & Legal	01/09/18
1.1	Maddie Pratt – WHS Officer	Added tick information	Megan Brewster – WHS Manager	01/04/22
1.2	Emma Davies – WHS Advisor	Reviewed information for currency	Megan Brewster – WHS Manager	01/03/23
2	David Appleby	Moved to new template. Removed roles and responsibilities.	Ian Pike – Executive Manager People & Culture	04/06/24

Document control

Document Owner	Group Manager SH&W			
Mandatory Reviewer(s)	SHW Team			
Approvals	Executive Manager People and Culture			
Key Document Details	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	<input type="checkbox"/> System Critical	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal/Reg Req	<input type="checkbox"/> Board Approval
Previous Document Rescinded	Standard – FRS Bites and Stings (HW2016-407/3.011) Standard – Bites and Stings (HW2016-407/1/2.005)			

Approved By	Executive Manager People & Culture	TRIM No	HW2021-285/10.018
Approved Date	04/06/2024	Version No	2



1 Purpose

This document describes the standards and procedures within Hunter Water Corporation (HWC) to manage Bites and Stings effectively and the HWC Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Management System's commitment to compliance with the NSW WHS Act and WHS Regulation.

2 Objectives

The of this standard are to ensure that all areas, functions, and work processes that may have a bites and stings risk are effectively managed to ensure the health and safety of Hunter Water people, contractors, and the general public.

3 Scope

This Standard applies to all Hunter Water Business Units. This standard covers the requirements associated with Bites and Stings within HWC.

4 Definitions

Term	Definition
Bites and Stings	Humans can be injured by the bites or stings of many animals, including mammals such as dogs, cats, and other animals, arthropods such as spiders, bees, wasps, snakes, and marine animals.
Risk Standard	The Risk Standards are a Water Services Association Australia (WSAA) initiative to collectively identify the industry fatality potential topics and identify the critical controls (i.e., "must do's, critical elements") to provide clarity to workers and leaders on the controls that will prevent fatality.
First Aid	The immediate treatment or care is given to a person suffering from an injury or illness by a trained, competent first aider until more advanced care is provided or the person recovers.
Hazard	A situation that can harm a person and the environment and damage property.
Hierarchy of controls	<p>Identify the risk control actions and responsibilities by identifying controls in the following specific order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eliminate the hazard <p>If elimination of the hazard is not reasonably practicable, minimise the risk so far as reasonably practicable by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Substituting (wholly or partly) the hazard giving rise to the risk with something that gives rise to a lesser risk ▪ Isolating the hazard from any person exposed to it ▪ Implementing engineering controls ▪ Administrative controls ▪ Personal protective equipment (PPE) <p>The aim should be to apply controls as far up the hierarchy as practicable, recognising that the residual risk rating should be reduced to as low as reasonably practicable or to a tolerable level for work to proceed.</p> <p>Multiple controls should be considered, offering several layers of defence. Whenever there is a firm reliance on administrative and PPE over higher-order controls, there should be increased levels of supervision.</p>



Term	Definition
Incident	An event or circumstance that could have or did lead to unintended and unnecessary harm to a person and loss or damage or adverse consequences. This definition of an incident includes near misses.
Line Leader	A Line Leader is a person with day-to-day supervisory responsibilities for workers within a functional area of the business. A Line Leader includes, but is not limited to, Supervisors, Gangers, Work Group Leaders. A Line Leader is also considered a worker but has additional responsibilities for implementing the WHS Management System as identified in the WHS Management System and position description.
High-Risk Work Permit	A permit is developed to lower the risk of activities by controlling when and how the high-risk activity is undertaken.
Manager	A person is responsible for managing a functional area of the business, including the workers within the relevant functional area. This includes, but is not limited to, Group Managers, Business Unit Managers, Department Managers, and Project Managers. A manager is also considered a worker. However, managers may have additional responsibilities for implementing the WHS Management System and any other duties as an officer of the business.
Notifiable incident	A 'notifiable incident' as outlined in the WHS Act is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Death of a person ▪ 'Serious injury or illness' or ▪ 'Dangerous incident'
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Any clothing, equipment, or substance designed to protect a person from risks of injury or illness.
PCBU	A 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) is a legal term under WHS laws for individuals, businesses or organisations conducting business. A person who performs work for a PCBU is considered a worker.
Reasonably practicable	The following criteria must be applied in determining what is reasonably practicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What the person knows or ought to reasonably know about the hazard and ways of eliminating or minimising the hazard ▪ Availability and suitability of ways to eliminating or minimising the hazard <p>The cost associated with the availability and suitability of eliminating or minimising the hazard, considering the cost if it is grossly disproportionate to the risk.</p>
Risk	Risk is the likelihood and consequence of injury or harm when exposed to a hazard.
Risk Control	Means acting to eliminate health and safety risks so far as is reasonably practicable, and if that is not possible, minimising the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. Eliminating a hazard will also eliminate any risks associated with that hazard.
Structure	Includes but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A building, construction, wall, mast, tower, pylon, structural cable or telecommunications structure ▪ Underground works (including shafts and tunnels), pipe, pipeline, river works, earthworks or earth retaining construction, or other construction designed to preserve or alter a natural feature ▪ A road or highway, footpath or driveway, railway line or siding, tramway line, dock or harbour, water storage or supply system



Term	Definition
	<p>(including a constructed lagoon), sewerage or drainage system, electricity or gas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gasholder, park, or recreation ground (including, for example, a playing field or swimming pool) ▪ Production, storage, or distribution facilities for heavy industries ▪ Fixed plant

5 Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities can be located in the [WHSMA Manual](#).

Individual guidance booklets can be found via the Responsibility, Accountability, and Authority Manual [HW2021-534](#).

6 General Requirements

6.1 What is a bite?

A bite is when an insect uses its mouth to break a person's skin, usually so it can feed. Insect bites usually itch.

6.2 What is a sting?

A sting is when an insect uses another body part, such as a barbed stinger at its tail end, to pierce the skin and inject venom (like poison).

7 Key Elements – Managing the Risks Associated with Bites and Stings

7.1 Ticks

a. How to Reduce the Likelihood of Being Bitten

Wear appropriate clothing outdoors in tick areas, including long-sleeved shirts, long pants tucked into socks, and a wide-brimmed hat. Ticks are more easily detected on light-coloured clothing. Spray clothes and hats with an insect repellent and wear a repellent that contains DEET or Picaridin. On return, all clothing should be removed from a known tick area, and the body searched for ticks, especially behind the ears, on the back of the head, groin, armpits, and back of knees. Be careful where clothes are placed as they may introduce ticks inside buildings. Mow grass and keep mulch and leaf litter away from the main entrance to buildings.

b. How to Remove a Tick

Remove a tick as soon as possible after locating it. Use fine, pointed forceps and grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Gently pull the tick straight out with steady pressure. You can also remove a tick by using a freezing spray. This allows a better chance to remove the tick entirely. Do not try to kill the tick with methylated spirits or any other chemicals. This will cause the tick to inject more toxins.

7.2 Snakes

7.2.1 How to Reduce the Risk of Snake Bites

- Avoid walking through long grass if possible. Wear long pants and rugged boots if you must walk through long grass or dense vegetation.
- Be careful when gardening or clearing wood piles (wear gloves)



- Stay on paths where possible
- Watch where you step
- Leave snakes alone – they may see you as a threat. Many bites occur when snakes are surprised, or people try to catch or kill them.

7.2.2 How to Reduce the Risk of Snake Bites

Follow DRSABCD. Reassure the patient and ask them not to move. Apply an elasticised roller bandage over the bite site as soon as possible. Apply an elasticised bandage (use clothing if unavailable) starting just above the fingers or toes of the bitten limb, and move upwards on the limb as far as can be reached (include the snake bite). Apply firmly without stopping the blood supply to the limb. Immobilise the bandaged limb with splints. Ensure the patient does not move. Write down the time of the bite and when the bandage was applied. Stay with the patient.

Regularly check circulation in fingers or toes.

Ensure an ambulance has been called.

7.3 Mosquitos, Wasps and other flying insects

7.3.1 How to Reduce the Likelihood of Being Stung

Personal protection is the best way to reduce mosquito bites. If you are active outdoors or living or working close to wetlands, there are some simple measures you can take to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites:

- Wear loose-fitting clothes, including long sleeve shirts, pants, and covered footwear where possible
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin (the best repellents contain at least 20% DEET or Picaridin). When using personal insect repellents, follow the manufacturer's directions for use, and when using a particular repellent for the first time, apply to a small section of skin first to check for any signs of allergy.
- Report large nests of bees, wasps, and hornets to the supervisor for professional removal/relocation. Do not attempt to exterminate large colonies.

7.4 Dogs/Aggressive animals

7.4.1 How to Reduce the Likelihood of Being Attached by a Dog/Aggressive Animal

Persons tasked with entering residences shall complete a risk assessment before entering. If the presence of a dog is identified, entry to the residence shall not be permitted unless the owner restrains the dog and the person doing the task feels confident and safe to enter. Ways to identify if there is a dog on the property include:

- Visual contact with animal
- Barking
- Signage on the gate or fence

Suppose workers identify an uncontrolled animal in a public area, and the animal poses a threat, or you feel unsafe. In that case, the area should be avoided, and feedback should be given to your supervisor.

7.4.2 How to Response to a Dog Attack/Aggressive Animal

- Immediate measures shall be taken to put distance/barriers between yourself and the animal
- Call for help
- Clean the wound immediately: run it under warm water for a few minutes to ensure it is thoroughly cleaned



- Encourage bleeding from the wound: if it is not already bleeding, gently squeeze the wound to encourage it to bleed, which will help prevent bacteria from entering the wound
- Because there is a risk of infection, Hunter Water recommends seeking medical advice

7.5 Spiders

7.5.1 Funnel Web/Mouse Spider

If on a limb, apply a broad crepe bandage over the bite site immediately. Apply an elasticised roller bandage starting just above the fingers or toes of the bitten limb, and move upwards on the limb as far as can be reached (include the bite). Apply firmly without stopping the blood supply to the limb. Immobilise the injured limb with splints and ensure the patient does not move. Ensure an ambulance has been called.

7.5.2 Red-back or Other Spider Bites

Wash with soap and water. Apply icepack (cold compress) to relieve the pain. Seek medical attention if a patient develops severe symptoms.

8 Training

Hunter Water must provide awareness training for workers exposed to bites and stings.

Appropriate first aid training shall also be provided where applicable.

9 Monitoring and Review

Monitoring processes for this topic include:

- High Risk Audits
- Critical Element Focussed Observations
- Safe Behaviour Observations
- Field Inspections

Review processes for this topic include:

- Review of applicable injury and incident reports
- Review of hazard reports in Protecht
- Review of this standard and associated documents, Risk Registers, Bow Tie diagrams following a high potential incident
- Engagement with Field Safety Committee and any relevant sub-committees.

10 Related Documents

Document ID	Document Title
Assessment	Pre-Task Risk Assessment PTR
Standard	Consultation, Cooperation, Participation and Coordination
Manual	WHSMA Manual
Manual	Responsibility, Accountability and Authority Manual (HW2021-534)



11 Associated Regulations and Standards

Document ID	Document Title
Act	NSW WHS Act 2011
Regulation	WHS Regulation 2017
Code of Practice	Code of Practice – How to manage work health and safety risks
Code of Practice	Code of Practice – Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination
Code of Practice	Code of Practice – First Aid in the Workplace