



Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries

You can find poison ivy along fences, walls, utility poles and trees. It gives off an oily substance that spreads the plant's poison to your unprotected skin. Most people are allergic to it. The skin rash can be much worse

in some people than others.

What do we need to know?

- Identification of poison ivy is key! Recognizing it in your work area is the first step in avoiding exposure. Remember: "*leaves of three - let it be*" and "*berries white, a poisonous sight*".
- Poison ivy likes to grow in moist, warm places. The plants generally have three leaves per stem but can have more.
- The oil from poison ivy causes the skin rash. It is sticky, clear, and odorless. The oil usually appears when the plants are being cut or cleared from a fence line and can be easily carried on your clothing.
- The oil can penetrate your skin in minutes. You'll first notice redness and swelling and can become worse in 24 to 72 hours.
- The typical rash is a red line caused by the plant dragging across your skin. However, patches of rash can break out on your neck or between the fingers.
- The rash may continue for up to two weeks. If the skin is broken by scratching, then infection can complicate the condition.

What should we do to treat poison ivy?

- The best treatment is prevention - there's no real cure available.
- Wash the oily sap from your skin with water and soap as soon as possible. Control itching with an antihistamine like Atarax or Benadryl.
- For mild cases, a topical cortisone such as Ruhligel can be soothing, as can cool compresses of Burrow's solution or Calamine lotion.

What should we do out on the job?

- The only true way to prevent poison ivy problems is to avoid contact. Long pants and sleeves are very important if you're venturing into an unknown area.
- A new barrier cream called Ivy Block can be applied to the skin before going out on the job and will form a protective layer. The drug Trental may prevent the rash, but needs to be taken at the beginning of the summer work season.
- After exposure to poison ivy, remember that the oil can be on your clothing and shoes. After removing your work apparel at home, make sure to wash your hands and wash your clothing separately from the rest of your laundry to avoid cross contamination.

Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.

