**Tick Removal**

If you are working outdoors in a field or forested area, you are at risk of being bitten by ticks. Ticks are tiny, eight legged organisms, classified as parasitic arachnids, that attach themselves to an animal and feed off of it for several days. They are known as “vectors” for the transfer of such ailments as Lyme disease, Tick Paralysis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Because ticks are such well known vectors of human disease, many people panic when they realize that they have been bitten and improperly remove the tick. This can cause problems above and beyond the standard concerns raised by these insects.

If the tick is removed by force, there is a chance of the head being pulled from the body and causing and infection. This is because ticks have a screw-shaped head that burrows beneath the skin to feed. Unless the tick unlocks itself, the head may be left behind.

Many “home-remedies” exist for tick removal. Some believe that if you poke it with a needle, or place it close to a flame, it will unlock itself to run away. This is not true. When threatened, a tick will burrow its head further into the host and attempt to ride out the disturbance. If the tick is dealt a mortal wound, such as being punctured by a needle, there is a chance that it will release further contaminants into the host. This dramatically increases the chance of infection.

To increase your chance of avoiding tick-related illness, proper removal is essential.

1. Follow all medical and first aid instruction.
2. Gently grab the tick with a tweezers as close to the head as is possible. It is very important to employ a light touch to avoid complications.
3. Next, lightly pull the tick upwards. Do not pull too hard or too far. The idea is to have the tick feel a constant pull. (Think, “Hey, buddy, it’s time to go,” not “Get the heck out of me!”)
4. Continue to gently pull the tick upward, and it will let go on its own. This may take a few minutes.
5. Once the tick is removed, place the tick in a baggy or jar, and call a doctor. It is wise to have your bite examined, and having the tick available will assist the doctor in determining what kind of infection to look for.

If you follow these steps, you will greatly decrease your chances of infection; however, preventive measures should always be taken when working in an area that could be infested with ticks. To get more information, contact the Forest Service in your area.

This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving this training.

Organization:

Trainer: Trainer’s Signature:

Class Participants:

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