

WHAT TO DO WHEN ENCOUNTERING BEES OR OTHER INFESTATIONS ON SITE

1. BEE ATTACK RESULTING IN SERIOUS INJURY

Recently a tower climber was seriously injured because of a bee attack while he was working at height. To aggravate the situation the climber jumped from the tower to escape the bees and suffered fatal injuries because of the fall.

Numerous other scenarios are known in the work at height community where workers have been seriously injured by bee attacks:

- A worker was drilling into a brick wall and drilled into a bee nest; the worker ended up with more than 500 stings and was admitted to the hospital in a critical condition.
- A team of workers were doing slope clearing and disturbed a bee nest resulting in one fatality and two seriously injured.

2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR SITE SUPERVISORS:

2.1 How do I assess the tower and surrounding area for bee activity?

- 2.1.1 Before work starts, look for permanent or nesting bees on the structure itself – such as inside the power distribution boxes and/or inside the covers of microwave antennas.
- 2.1.2 Monitor the tower as you climb for any possible dangers.

2.2 What do I do if I encounter bees whilst on site?

- 2.2.1 Avoid swatting at the bees, stop working and calmly remove yourself from the situation
- 2.2.2 Phone a professional to remove the nest or the swarm.

2.3 What type of bee activities should I be aware of?

- 2.3.1 Swarming bees and permanently nesting bees.



2.4 How can swarming bees be identified?

- 2.4.1 By how the bees converge in the open, in tight clusters.



3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT BEES

A swarm cluster can be as small as an orange or as large as a beach ball and travel between 5 and 12km/h. There can be roughly 25,000 to 30,000 bees in a swarm.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

The industry now realises that there is a need to train workers on how to identify bee and other hazards and what to do when it is found on site.

Gravity Training is leading the way and have not only included awareness of these hazards in the work at height standards but also as part of the work at height training courses. Please contact us for further information at tel: [+27123491318](tel:+27123491318) or visit our website for more information <https://gravitytraining.co.za/>

