

Lions and Wolves and Bears-Oh My!



A recent incident involving a 26-year-old worker in northern Saskatchewan is a reminder that employers must take reasonable steps to protect workers from *all* known hazards in the workplace'including animals.

The kitchen worker at Cameco's Cigar Lake uranium mine was on break and walking between buildings shortly after midnight when he was attacked by a lone wolf.

Fortunately, a security guard interrupted the attack and scared the wolf away. She also administered first aid. The worker was flown to Saskatoon where he's recovering and in good spirits.

Other examples of workers attacked by animals and insects on the job include:

- A zoo worker in Qu^ébec was attacked and seriously injured by a lion.
- An oil sands worker in Alberta was attacked and killed by a bear while she was doing electrical work. Other workers tried to scare the bear away with horns, but were unable to do so.
- An Alberta Environment worker was working at a field camp when she was attacked by a cougar. Co-workers managed to fight the big cat off and give her first aid until she was taken to the hospital by air ambulance.
- A postal worker was making her deliveries when a dog broke loose from its harness, raced toward her, grabbed hold of her left leg and pulled her to the ground. It then sunk its teeth into her right leg, refusing to relent until a homeowner intervened'using a crowbar.
- A U.S. Postal Service worker in Chicago was hospitalized after being attacked by a swarm of hornets while delivering mail.

To determine if your workers are at risk of attacks by animals (or insects), consider:

- Any history of animal attacks against workers or others in the area;
- Knowledge of the presence of dangerous animals in or near the workplace; and
- The nature of the work. For example, it's foreseeable that a logger may be attacked by a bear because he must work in the forest where bear live.

If animal attacks are a foreseeable hazard, take appropriate steps to protect your workers. For example, give workers facing possible attacks by bears pepper

spray, bear repellent or 'bear bangers' (which make a loud noise designed to drive bears away).

And ensure that workers are properly trained on how to avoid animal attacks and respond if an attack occurs anyway. For example, give workers tips on what to do if they see a bear or if one attacks.