



FMG HAZARD ALERT TICKS

Location: Canfor Woodlands Operations
Date of Incidents: May 2014

Details:

Over the past 6 weeks, FMG has reported 7 incidents related to Ticks (5 reported in the Kootenay region, 2 reported in Prince George).

- Two of the incidents occurred with tree planting staff, and the ticks had to be removed by a first aid attendant
- Five incidents where the ticks were noticed crawling on the employee, or in field clothing at the end of the day

There are more than 20 species of ticks in British Columbia, but only one species that humans would normally be exposed to in the interior of BC and AB. There is little danger of disease provided they are removed promptly. Although the bites may sometimes be painful and slow healing. Adult ticks are distinguished from insects by having eight legs rather than six. They cannot jump or fly and do not drop from trees. Ticks require blood as a source of protein for egg development.

The Rocky Mountain Wood Tick (*Dermacentor andersoni*)

In BC, this tick occurs in the interior dry belt from the United States border north as far as Williams Lake and eastward into Alberta. This is most likely the species found in the PG area. It is not found west of the Coast Range mountains. It is a three-host tick, a new host being sought for each one of its three feedings which occur over a period of 1 to 3 years. Usually rodents and other small animals serve for the first two feedings, and large animals such as deer, cattle, dogs, sheep and humans serve as the host for the last feeding. This tick is most frequently encountered between March and June, usually in open, rocky areas.



If this tick is successful in finding a host, it will attach their mouthparts to the skin by means of a rapidly hardening cement. Feeding females quickly increase in size, and can reach the size of a swollen raisin they drop to the ground and, after several weeks, lay a few thousand eggs and dies.

Although this tick is a known carrier of Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia, and Colorado tick fever in the United States, these diseases rarely occur in Canada. However, in British Columbia this tick causes a disease in man and animals called tick paralysis. The disease is characterized by initial symptoms of numbness in the feet and legs causing difficulty in walking and standing, after a female tick has been feeding for about 5 days. The hands and arms may be affected next and there is often partial paralysis of the throat and tongue muscles, resulting in difficulty swallowing and speaking. There is little pain and usually no fever. Complete recovery occurs when the tick is removed

Removal of Attached Ticks

Many methods have been developed over the years for removing feeding ticks which connect themselves to their host with small, barbed mouthparts. Ticks do not burrow under the skin. Ticks are most safely and effectively removed by a slow and gentle pull without twisting, using tweezers or fingers. This will normally remove the tick with the mouthparts attached. The wound should be treated with an antiseptic. If you are exposed to a Tick bite, and it is attached, a visit to a Level three first aid attendant is recommended.

There is no need to fear or avoid tick-infested country. A few simple precautions, outlined below, will decrease the likelihood of tick bites.

Some general safety precautions to follow:

- Wear light colored clothing whenever possible; tuck in your shirt to your pants and your pants into your work boots if possible to reduce any skin exposure;
- Walk on cleared trails wherever possible, as ticks usually attach themselves to you as you pass through brush or tall grass (ticks do not fly and they also do not drop from tree crowns);
- Use insect repellent at your discretion as it could deter tick bites.
- When resting, sit on a bare rock, a ground sheet, or a vegetation free area instead of stretching out on vegetation.
- Complete a 'tick check' for yourselves and your canine companions at the end of every field day, whether your skin was covered or not. Focus on areas of greater perspiration such as your scalp, underarms and groin area. Check the backs of everyone in the crew. Do not stop if you have found one tick – continue to search your whole body (or that of your dog) to ensure there are no additional risks to infection.

For more information, please call: [Kerri Simmons, 250-962-3456](tel:250-962-3456)

