



AN ORCHARD WORKER DIES AFTER HE IS STUNG BY HONEY BEES

A 49-year-old Hispanic orchard worker, Alejandro*, died when he was stung by numerous honey bees while spraying dates with high-pressure water in a date palm orchard. Alejandro was in an open raised bucket that was towed by a co-worker in a tractor. He sprayed close to a hidden beehive, and multiple bees began to sting him. He was allergic to bee stings.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Alejandro didn't have a prescription for medicine (epinephrine auto-injector) that would treat severe allergic reactions.

Workers who are allergic to insect stings or bites should visit a health care professional to get a prescription for an epinephrine auto-injector and carry it with them at all times.

Alejandro and his co-workers were not aware there were bees or hives in the date palm orchard where they were spraying water.

Conduct a hazard assessment of the work area before work begins. If a beehive or nest is found, it should be removed by a bee removal service.

Alejandro and his co-workers were not trained on insect bite hazards.

Agricultural employers should train workers in insect sting incident response and first aid, including how to use an epinephrine auto-injector.

* Not the victim's real name

Resource:

California Department of Public Health, Africanized Honey Bees:
(See: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/AfricanizedHoneybees.aspx>)

The California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program has been investigating work-related deaths since 1992. The goal of the FACE program is to prevent these deaths by informing workers and managers of worksite hazards and how to avoid them.

For a complete report of this case (17CA003) and information on the California FACE program, contact:

California Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Branch (OHB), FACE Program
850 Marina Bay Parkway, P-3, Richmond, CA 94804
OHB phone: (510) 620-5757

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Visit our website at: www.cdph.ca.gov/face

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California Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Branch, FACE Program
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FACE stands for "Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation." The purpose of the FACE program is to find problems that may cause work-related deaths so that employers and employees can help prevent them. FACE is a public health program run by the California Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Branch, and funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.



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