

# HSE Bulletin (Ref.23/2013)

## False Widow Spider

Date of issue: 29 January 2014  
Date of expiry: 08 October 2014

### Background



False Widow Spider with distinctive markings on abdomen

There has been significant press coverage recently regarding the increasing population of the False Widow Spider in London and the South East and a potential risk of injury if bitten.

The bite is similar to that of a bee sting but as everybody has different sensitivity to bites then it could be very uncomfortable if bitten several times; for example if a spider gets trapped between clothing and the wearer's skin. Bites are not considered dangerous and will not cause long term injury.

False Widow Spiders have already been identified at two fleet depots on the London Underground network. To date nobody has been bitten. These spiders like warm, dry and dark places and are relatively shy and will not bite unless provoked.

### Instruction

Operatives should exercise sensible precautions when undertaking their duties to avoid any contact with the spider. Do not put your hands/arms into places where you cannot see whether a spider and/or web may be present. Ensure you have adequate task lighting to see if a spider may be present.

If any spiders or spider webs are present then they should be brushed away using a suitable brush or probe, the choice of which will be dependent on the location. This action alone should cause the spider to vacate. Working gloves will offer significant protection from bites – no specific glove is recommended.

If you get bitten or suspect that you may have been bitten then it is advisable to attend your doctor for assessment and it is advisable to take a copy of this notice with you to assist medical staff.

**Please communicate this alert to your teams, projects and suppliers as appropriate**

Incident reference	
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