



HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Promoting a safer place to work and study

HSEM BULLETIN

Redback Spiders

Who needs to read this?

All Curtin Staff and Students

Information

Redback Spiders are widespread in Australia. They build webs anywhere that provides a sheltered retreat area, adequate warmth for breeding and a plentiful supply of food. Their webs consist of a tangled, funnel-like upper retreat area from which vertical, sticky catching threads run to ground attachments. The webs are usually built in dry, sheltered areas such as under roof eaves, floorboards, shelves, flower pots, sheds, rocks, woodpiles, old tins, logs and corners.



Female Redback Spiders are black (occasionally brown) with an obvious orange to red longitudinal stripe on the upper abdomen. The red stripe could be broken or it could be an hourglass-shaped marking. Juvenile females have white markings on the abdomen. The males' red markings are often less distinct.

When disturbed, Redback spiders usually try to escape or feign death by curling their legs and dropping to the ground. A Redback spider's bite is potentially harmful. Those at greater risk of severe reactions to spider venom include babies, young children, the elderly and people with an existing heart condition.

Some people may also be allergic to certain venom and experience an adverse reaction.

The bite may produce the following symptoms:

- Intense localised pain which increases and spreads
- Patchy sweating
- Muscle weakness or spasms
- Headache

Recommendations

Always check before moving items that have been stored outdoors for some time. Wear gloves when cleaning rubbish areas.

Notify Properties on ext. 2020 if there are Redback spiders in your work area.

If bitten by a Redback spider, contact your [first aid officer](#) or Security on ext. 4444. Apply an ice pack to the bitten area to relieve pain.

Who do we call with questions?

If you have any queries, please contact Health and Safety on 9266 4900 or email healthandsafety@curtin.edu.au.

References

Western Australian Museum

Australian Museum

Perth Zoo

St John Ambulance

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