

# Tailgate Safety Topic Poison Plants...

Call a doctor if:

The rash (allergic contact dermatitis) from poison ivy, oak, or sumac causes great discomfort that is not relieved by home treatment (for instance, you apply calamine lotion to the rash, but itching continues to make it difficult to sleep). The rash shows signs of infection, such as pain, swelling, or warmth around the affected area.

The rash covers a very large area of the body. Home treatment causes the rash to get worse or to come back after nearly disappearing. Rashes occur frequently, and you are not sure what is causing them. (The rashes may be caused by another kind of plant.) Your mouth is swollen or you think the rash has spread to your mouth. The rash has spread to your face, particularly around an eye.

You have a rash and a weakened immune system. Call 911 if you are having a hard time breathing. Watchful waiting is a wait-and-see approach. If the rash is not severe, watchful waiting may be appropriate. Home treatment may be used to relieve symptoms. Dark spots may develop, but this is not serious.

Safety is a way of life!

## Poison Plant - Prevention

### Poison Ivy, Oak & Sumac

Only the oil (urushiol) from poison ivy, oak, or sumac plants can cause a rash (allergic contact dermatitis). The best way to avoid contact with urushiol and getting a rash is to avoid the plants. The best prevention is to learn to recognize these plants, especially those near where you live. The plants may look different depending on the season and the area where they are growing. While their appearance changes with the seasons, the plants usually contain the same amount of urushiol year-round, even in the winter when they only appear as bare sticks. Black areas on the plants may help you identify them in the winter (urushiol turns black when exposed to air). Living, dormant, and dead plants all contain urushiol, although dead leaves do not contain a lot of it. When you cannot avoid being near poison ivy, heavy clothing (long pants, long sleeves, enclosed footwear) may help prevent the oil from touching your skin. Clothing or any other object that has touched the plant must be handled carefully and washed thoroughly. Barrier creams and lotions can be used to prevent urushiol from contacting the skin or to reduce the severity of a reaction. These creams vary in their potency and are not always effective. If you suspect that your skin has touched poison ivy, oak, or sumac, rinse the area with water immediately (within 10 to 15 minutes) to help prevent a reaction. Most of the oil is absorbed into the skin within 30 minutes.<sup>1</sup> Clothing should also be thoroughly washed right away. Contaminated surfaces should be cleaned with rubbing alcohol.

**Giant Hogweed** contains a clear, watery sap which contains a glucoside that causes photo-dermatitis. Skin contact followed by exposure to sunlight produces painful, burning blisters that may develop into purplish or blackened scars. If you do come into contact with the plant, you are advised to wash the affected areas immediately, keep them out of direct sunlight and seek medical advice at the earliest opportunity. Treatment with topical steroids early in the reaction can reduce its severity - this must be done after taking medical advice. Otherwise it is a case of preventing infection, covering with light dressings and waiting for recovery.

### References/Clarification:

Safety Bulletin Poison Ivy

Contact Employee Safety & Health for further information or questions regarding this Topic or Policy

# Tailgate Safety Topic

## Poison Plants—Identification

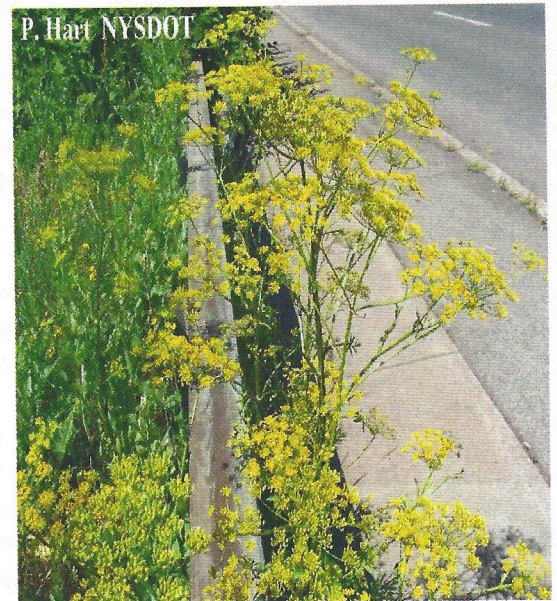
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**Cow Parsnip:** A large plant that grows from 3-10 feet tall. Leaves are 12"-18" and rough and hairy. Leaves are divided into 3 segments, with coarsely toothed leaflets and a broad wing at the base of each leaf stalk. Stems are rough, hairy, hollow and grooved. It has white or cream colored flowers with a sweet fragrance. Flowers have 5 petals of different sizes and are arranged in broad, flat-topped clusters at the top of short stalks. Blooms in mid-summer.



Naja Kraus DEC-FHP

**Wild Parsnip:** A large plant that stands erect at 2-5 feet tall. Leaves are alternate, pinnately compound, branched, and have saw-toothed edges. Each leaf has 5-15 ovate to oblong leaflets with variable toothed edges and deep lobes. Stems are hollow and deeply grooved. It has small, 5-petaled, yellow flowers that are arranged in a flat-topped broad umbel 2-6 inches across; flowers June-September. The flowers produce a round, smooth, straw-colored seedpod that is approximately 0.25 inches in size. Wild parsnip has a long, cone-shaped fleshy thick taproot.



P. Hart NYS DOT

### References/Clarification:

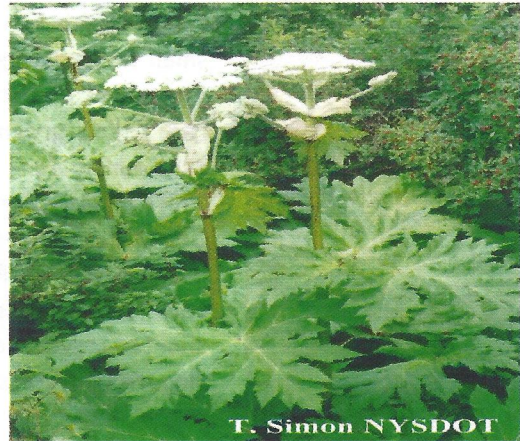
Safety Bulletin Poison Ivy

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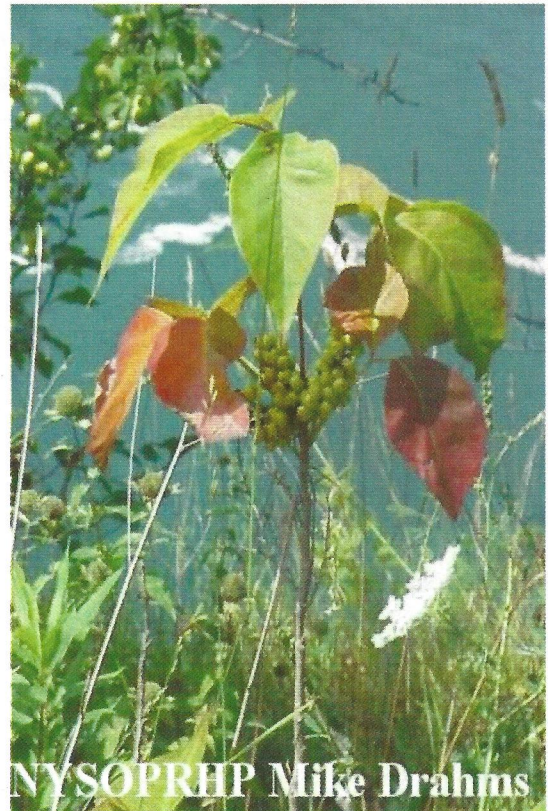
## Tailgate Safety Topic Poison Plants—Identification

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**Giant Hogweed:** Very large, erect biennial or perennial. Small white flowers appear in late summer, forming a large, flat-topped umbel up to 2.5 feet across. Hollow, rigid stems grow 2-4 inches in diameter and 8-14 feet tall and have purple blotches and coarse hairs. Leaves can be 5 feet across, are lobed and deeply incised.



**Poison Ivy:** Perennial plants that grow erect or as trailing vines with aerial rootlets. Leaves are 3-parted. Flowers (May-July) are small yellowish and it produces small, smooth white rounded fruit (August-November) that form a cluster. It can grow as a vine, as a groundcover or as a shrub. In mowed areas, the vine "learns" to stay low to the ground and grow small leaves, often only about 3/4 of an inch long. A healthy vine growing up a tree may have leaves 8 inches long. Two to three inches is a common size. Poison Ivy and Poison Oak are very similar in appearance and both cause irritation with urushiol oil. Poison Oak has more rounded leaves and points. Its leaf surface is also less smooth, tending to be "lumpy" between the veins.



### References/Clarification:

Safety Bulletin Poison Ivy

Contact Employee Safety & Health for further information or questions regarding this Topic or Policy

# Tailgate Safety Topic

## Poison Plants—Identification

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**Poison Sumac:** A woody shrub or small tree growing up to 20 feet tall. The stems of the leaflets are always red. Yellow-green flowers are present during June and July. The small white or grey berries are visible in September. Non-poisonous sumac has red berries. Poison Sumac differs from other sumacs in having shorter leaves, fewer leaflets, and smooth leaf edges.



**Stinging Nettle:** The stinging hairs on stems and leaves produce an intense burning and itching sensation that can last up to thirty minutes.



### References/Clarification:

Safety Bulletin Poison Ivy

Contact Employee Safety & Health for further information or questions regarding this Topic or Policy

# Tailgate Safety Topic

## Bloodborne Pathogens

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**Bloodborne Pathogens** means pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

**Contaminated Sharps** means any contaminated object that can penetrate the skin including, but not limited to, needles, scalpels, broken glass, broken capillary tubes, and exposed ends of dental wires.

**Decontamination** means the use of physical or chemical means to remove, inactivate, or destroy bloodborne pathogens on a surface or item to the point where they are no longer capable of transmitting infectious particles and the surface or item is rendered safe for handling, use, or disposal.

**Exposure Incident** means a specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that results from the performance of an employee's duties.

**Universal Precautions** is an approach to infection control. According to the concept of Universal Precautions, all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.

### References/Clarification:

Safety Bulletin Infectious  
Materials/Bloodborne Pathogens

Contact Employee Safety &  
Health for further information  
or questions regarding this  
Topic or Policy

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms in the blood or other body fluids that can cause illness and disease in people. These microorganisms can be transmitted through contact with contaminated blood and body fluids.

When bloodborne diseases are mentioned, most people think automatically of AIDS, but actually HBV, or the hepatitis B virus, is much more common. AIDS is usually fatal, though it may take years for symptoms to appear. HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is primarily transmitted through sexual contact, though it may also be contracted through contact with contaminated blood or some body fluids. HBV attacks the liver, and is sometimes fatal. It is transmitted through saliva, blood and other body fluids.

### Means of Transmission

Bloodborne pathogens are transmitted when contaminated blood or body fluids enter the body of another person. This can occur through a number of pathways, such as:

- An accidental puncture by a sharp object contaminated with the pathogen. "Sharps" include objects such as:
  - needles
  - scalpels
  - broken glass
  - razor blades
  - Open cuts or skin abrasions coming in contact with contaminated blood or body fluids

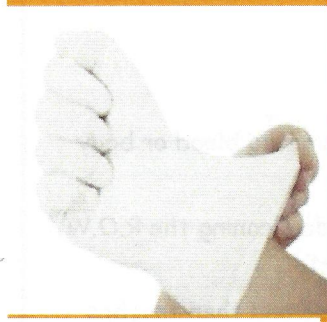
Job tasks that may expose you to Bloodborne pathogens include cleaning the R.O.W, accident scene response, treating a co-worker with an injury etc...

Indirect transmission (a person touches dried or caked on blood and then touches the eyes, mouth, nose or an open cut) (HBV only)

There are also many ways that these diseases are **not** transmitted. For instance bloodborne pathogens are not transmitted by touching an infected person, through coughing or sneezing or by using the same equipment, materials, toilets, water fountains or showers as an infected person. It is important that people are educated as to which ways are viable means of transmission of these dangerous diseases, and which are not.

# Tailgate Safety Topic Bloodborne Pathogens

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**WORK PRACTICES:** Universal Precautions - employees shall assume that all blood and body fluids may be infectious and shall avoid contact. Safe work practices shall be used to eliminate exposure to infectious materials, including:

- Using shovels, forks or tongs to remove/handle roadside debris to avoid direct contact.
- Carrying trash bags away from the body to avoid skin punctures.
- Using tools, **not hands**, to compact trash in barrels or other receptacles.
- Practice good hygiene. Wash hands frequently using antibacterial hand sanitizer after contact with potentially infectious material.
- Decontaminating/disinfecting tools and equipment after contact with potentially infectious material with a 9 to 1 water/bleach solution.
- Cover a cut, scratch, or any other break in the skin such as rashes and chapped hands.
- Do not open bags, boxes, packages or containers that are found while picking litter or trash pick-up.

**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPEMENT:** Any employee engaged in litter pick-up and performance of other janitorial/cleaning work need to use the following PPE as necessary based on their potential exposure Leather gloves, Face shield (If needed), Eye protection, and Disposable coveralls.

**TRAINING:** Regional managers and supervisors shall train employees performing litter pick-up and janitorial/cleaning work on Bloodborne Pathogens, and other procedures that minimize the potential for exposure to infectious material. The training shall be documented per the Safety Bulletin—Tailgate Safety Training Safety Bulletin.

**FOLLOW-UP:** In event an employee suspect's exposure to a needle stick or infectious material, contact the Agency Safety & Health Representative immediately. All immunizations and post-exposure evaluations shall be performed and appropriate medical records maintained, consistent with that required by the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.

Employees shall not handle red bags or packages marked 'INFECTIOUS' or 'BIOHAZARD'. If needles, drug vials, drug paraphernalia, or medical waste, are encountered notify the Regional Maintenance Environmental Specialist for direction regarding medical waste disposal.

## References/Clarification:

Safety Bulletin Infectious  
Materials

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Health for further information  
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Topic or Policy