

SAFETY SENSE

Survey: Students Not Educated About Fire Ants

(NAPSA)—Fire ants are a burning issue in 19 U.S. states. However, according to a recent survey, nearly 96 percent of nurses and athletic trainers from those states say their schools do not educate students about how to avoid fire ant hazards. And most of the remaining 4 percent say their schools educate students only after incidents occur.

Other findings of the survey, commissioned by Bayer Environmental Science, indicate that:

- 62 percent of respondents have treated students for fire ant-related injuries, with an average of 13 students per respondent.

- 74 percent believe that elementary school students are the most common victims of fire ant swarms. (Research indicates that children are most at risk because they are not mature enough to actively avoid fire ant mounds.)

- 34 percent believe the threat of fire ants and fire ant stings is often severe.

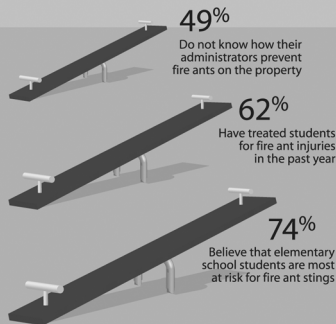
- Only 51 percent of respondents said their schools treat their grounds for fire ants.

Although they presently infest 19 states in the Southern and Western United States, fire ants continue to adapt to cooler weather, migrating to new states every year. They can be found nesting in the soil, at the base of trees and along sidewalks. When fire ant colonies are disturbed, several hundred thousand fire ants will attack, simultaneously biting, then stinging, the intruder.

Ten to 15 percent of the general population is allergic to fire ant stings. A fire ant allergy can cause severe swelling, epileptic seizures and respiratory problems. In the

DANGERS AT RECESS

According to nearly 250 school nurses and athletic trainers, fire ants are a serious health threat to students and schools.



Source: www.nofireants.com; 95% confidence level



In many parts of the country, fire ants pose a threat to schoolchildren, who are undereducated about the potential risks.

most severe cases, the stings can result in death.

Sensitive areas with zero-tolerance fire ant policies often include schools and nursing homes—where children and the elderly are most at risk. “Fire ants can be controlled with the professional application of TopChoice® insecticide. It virtually eliminates existing mounds, and creates an exclusion zone where populations are controlled for up to one year,” says Dr. Nate Royalty, entomologist with Bayer Environmental Science. “School administrators in infested states should work with local lawn care or pest management professionals on the best ways to educate students, as well as periodically inspect school property for infestations.”

For more information on combatting fire ants, visit the Web site at www.nofireants.com.