

## Hello Barton!

So this week I contemplated what topic to write on. With the changing of seasons comes new safety risks. So I decided to pick a fun one. No, not Halloween, not yet anyway. This week we are going to talk about something equally scary. PESTS! Particularly mice and Brown Recluse Spiders! As the weather cools, mice and spiders are trying to find a warm space to ride out the winter. That warm space could be near you!

**The threat of mice:** The threat of mice is usually recognized as the damage they cause. They often chew things like paper and clothing. The threat from this trait is because they are chewing those things to make a bed. They will pack it in tight places that include areas for wiring or venting. And the finely chewed paper makes a nice fire starter too! The other threat that mice pose is disease. The CDC lists 11 diseases that rodents transmit directly, and 14 that they carry indirectly (that are carried with critters they bring in like ticks). A sure sign that you have mice are little teeth marks on paper, cardboard or soft rubber, and small droppings.

**The threat of the Brown Recluse Spider:** The Brown Recluse is a small light tan spider. It is often identified with a dark violin shape on its back. The brown recluse venom contains a complex collection of enzymes which can cause hemolysis, the rupturing of blood cells. The red blood cells walls rupture, and the cells' contents are leaked, including the red, oxygen-bearing protein known as hemoglobin. The bite of a brown recluse has, in rare cases, caused damage to tissue. It is possible to be deadly in extreme cases. The larger risk is of infection of the bite. If bitten, you should capture the spider for positive identification (it is believed that there are more infections blamed on the brown recluse than actual spider bites due to misdiagnosis) and go to the emergency to be safe.

So how do I avoid these pests?

One way is to avoid letting them in. Steel wool, copper wool or expanding foam in possible entrances is a great way to start.

Traps will get the ones that already made it in – out. There are a variety of mouse traps. Those traps that snap your finger every time. Live traps (some people do relocate mice!). Multiple mice traps. Glue traps. They all work to some degree. There is no spray for mice. And if you have ever tried to find a spray for brown recluse, there are some, but not any at a local store. Most sprays are for all spiders-except brown recluse and black widow. Glue traps work to control, but they will not eliminate. At home we use diatomaceous earth in corners of the floor. It is safe for humans and pets, but it has microscopic shards that puncture their outer skeleton and they dehydrate to death. Be warned, it also harms beneficial bugs.

Brown recluses hide in small cozy places. Between wood, under cardboard, under clothes. Mice like similar places too. So the best way to avoid these.... Keep clean! Don't let clothes lay on the floor. Don't let food sit out. Vacuum up crumbs. Shake out shoes and clothes before putting them on. It makes sense that the best way to avoid pests is also the hardest to do!

Be safe and enjoy the changing seasons!

## Know your Campus Safety Officers:

This week's officer is Mark. Mark has been at Barton for one year. He comes with 13 years in law enforcement, 9.5 years in firefighting, and 6 years in the National Guard as a combat medic/EMT. Mark is married with kids. In his free time, he enjoys fishing and spending time with his family.



Lucas Stoelting  
Campus Safety



Lead Officer



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