

Snake Safety

Each year, an estimated 7,000 – 8,000 people are bitten by venomous snakes in the United States, and about 5 of those people die. The number of deaths would be much higher if people did not seek medical care. Types of venomous snakes include but are not limited to:

- Rattlesnake
- Copperhead
- Cottonmouth/Water Moccasins
- Coral snake



Workers are far more likely to suffer long-term injuries from snake bites than to die from them. For those bitten by rattlesnakes, 10–44 percent will have lasting injuries. An example of a disability or permanent injury is the ability to use a finger or lose part or all of it.

If you see a snake, keep a safe distance, and notify the supervisor. Other safety tips include:
Do not touch, handle, play with, antagonize, corner, or approach any snake.

- A snake's strike distance can be 1/2 to 2/3^{rds} the length of the snake.
- Treat any snake like it is poisonous and that it can bite you. If the snake remains in the work area, have professional animal control specialists safely remove the animal.
- Stay away from tall grass and piles of leaves when possible.
- Avoid climbing on rocks or piles of wood where a snake may be hiding.
- Be aware that snakes tend to be most active at dawn and dusk and in warm weather.
- Wear boots and long pants when working outdoors. Even denim jeans may prevent some, although not all, bites by smaller snakes.
- Wear leather gloves when handling brush and debris.

Treatment for venomous snake bite:

- Seek medical attention as soon as possible (proceed to the Hospital ER or dial 911 if needed).
 - Antivenom is the treatment for serious snake envenomation. The sooner antivenom can be started, the sooner irreversible damage from venom can be stopped.
 - Driving oneself to the hospital is not advised because people with snakebites can become dizzy or pass out.
- Take a photograph of the snake from a safe distance if possible. Identifying the snake can help with the treatment of the snakebite.
- Keep calm.
- Inform your supervisor.
- Apply First Aid while waiting for EMS staff to get you to the hospital.
- Lay or sit down with the bite in a neutral position of comfort.
- Remove rings and watches before swelling starts.
- Wash the bite with soap and water.
- Cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.
- Mark the leading edge of tenderness/swelling on the skin and write the time alongside it.

Do **NOT** do any of the following:

- Do not pick up the snake or try to trap it. NEVER handle a venomous snake, not even a dead one or its decapitated head.
- Do not wait for symptoms to appear if bitten, get medical help right away.
- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not slash the wound with a knife or cut it in any way.
- Do not try to suck out the venom.
- Do not apply ice or immerse the wound in water.
- Do not drink alcohol as a painkiller.
- Do not take pain relievers (such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen).
- Do not apply electric shock or other home remedies.

Group Questions:

What should you do if you will be working in an area where snakes may be present?

What will you do if you see a snake?

What are other types of potentially dangerous wildlife in the area?

DEPARTMENT/LOCATION: _____ **MEETING DATE:** _____
Meeting Lead By: _____ Time Started: _____
Title: _____ Time Finished: _____

1. **Open Meeting & Present** Safety Topic: _____
2. **Read** minutes from previous meeting.
3. **Persons present (Print & Sign)**

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4. **Updates** – Status of previously presented safety concerns. Discuss any pending items.

5. **Incidents** – Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware. Discuss incidents or near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Summarize incidents and any injury trends. Review corrective actions that have been taken or are needed.

6. **Inspection/Audits** – Discuss findings and corrective actions of safety inspections made since last meeting.

7. **New Information** – Ask for employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, safety policy changes, etc.

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