



SAFETY ALERT Snake Alert

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ALERT:

With warmer weather comes an increase chance of workers being exposed to potentially venomous snakes.

Recent Bush Fires in NSW had the potential to displace many snakes and the sighting of snakes in NSW has increased dramatically this summer

All workers should be vigilant when working in or around snake prone areas like long grass, near rivers or creek beds, rocky landscapes or around clutter.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO AVOID CONTACT:

Snake encounters at any time of the year must be part of the risk assessment of any work site. Before commencing work the worker and PCBU must:

- Wear appropriate PPE (Gaiters, Long Pants, Thick Socks, Gloves and sturdy ankle high footwear)
- Make plenty of noise around the worksite and use a long handled tool like a broom to disturb vegetation to move snakes on.
- If you must pick up or move large rocks and debris please do so with caution. Hit the rock with a long handled tool and give it a minute or two before moving.
- Always have a first aid kit at the site within easy reach of all workers. The kit must have compression bandages.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF CONFRONTED BY A SNAKE:

If you encounter a snake the best advice is to freeze as the slightest movement can signal a predator or prey reaction in the snake and trigger a strike. In most cases a snake will take the first opportunity to escape however if it feels cornered or threatened it may strike at the threat to defend itself.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BITTEN BY A SNAKE:

If bitten by a snake **do** the following:

- Try to stay calm
- Apply a compression bandage from the bite wound to the lowest extremity (Fingers or Toes) and back up to hip or shoulder.



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- Mark the bite location on the dressing and immobilize the affected limb with a splint.
- Ring 000 for emergency treatment and remain immobile as much as possible

If bitten by a snake **Do Not** do the following:

- Do not try and kill the snake. This will only cause adrenalin and your heart rate to increase, helping spread the venom at a more rapid rate.
- Do not cut or bite the wound to allow the venom to bleed from the wound. This does not work
- Do not try and suck the venom from the wound.

Key Learning

If working in an area that may be inhabited by snakes ensure that a full risk analysis is completed prior to any workers commencing work.

For further information or if your trying to identity a snake species please refer to

www.whatsnakeisthat.com.au/nsw

Always treat a snake bite as a medical emergency and seek medical treatment immediately

For further information contact: Darren Gibson – WHS Manager 1300apprentice