

HAZARD ALERT

Incident Title:

Snake Safety

Date of Incident:

November 2017

The recent rise in temperature has resulted in the sudden presence of snakes across the state, including the Adelaide Metropolitan area. In spring, snakes emerge and bask in the sun to warm up by lying on warm surfaces (e.g. Asphalt, concrete and rocks which absorb heat) or under warm surfaces (e.g. Building materials, such as corrugated roofing iron).

What is snake habitat?

Snakes are most likely to be found in:

- ❖ Areas of long grass
- ❖ Stockpiles of material such as sleepers
- ❖ Under doors and holes in walls
- ❖ Drainage structures such as culverts
- ❖ Around permanent water sources



Snake safety while working

Things you can do to help prevent encounters with snakes:

- ❖ Avoid walking through thickly vegetated areas, especially during spring.
- ❖ Step onto, rather than over structures as there may be a snake on the other side.
- ❖ Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see.
- ❖ Wear over-the ankle boots and loose fitting long pants.
- ❖ Snakes can hear low frequency sounds like the thud of approaching footsteps and movement of a large object and will either move away or hide to avoid detection.

What to do if you see a snake

- ❖ DO NOT PANIC – stand still, snakes feel threatened by sudden movement, if you are still, the snake is more likely to move on as you are not perceived as a threat, once the snake is at a safe distance move away slowly, keeping an eye on the snake and call your supervisor for assistance.
- ❖ Never attempt to catch or kill a snake. They will defend themselves if confronted or threatened. Most snake bites occur when people try to catch or kill a snake.
- ❖ Contact a licensed snake catcher if you wish to have the snake removed from the area.

In South Australia, all snakes are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 (NPW Act). Where a snake has attacked or is attacking any person it is lawful to humanely kill the offending snake without any permit or authority under the NPW Act.