

Snake (and other crawly things) Safety

Compiled by CVEATC Security Supervisor James Kolar

Beware of Venomous Snakes:



Red Rattlesnake



Western Diamondback Rattlesnake



Pacific Coastal Rattlesnake

IDENTIFY: The only Venomous snakes in our area of Southern California are the Rattlesnakes. There are 3 species of Rattlesnake in this area.

1. The Red Rattlesnake; named for its copper red color. These are the largest of the rattlesnakes and can grow as large as 4 to 5 feet in length. Most often these snakes are relatively docile and not very aggressive and are easily walked up on before they rattle. This makes it easy to walk by them, but also makes them dangerous because you can be within striking range before you know you are near one.
2. The Western Diamondback Rattlesnake; unlike its eastern counterpart, the western diamond back rattlesnake isn't very large, growing to a length of only 2 to 3 feet. These rattlesnakes are more aggressive and more active.
3. The Pacific Coastal Rattlesnake isn't very big at all and is often thought to be a baby snake as they are between 8 and 18 inches long. Don't be fooled by its size though they are very aggressive.

AVOID: There are only a few simple rules to know to avoid being bitten by a rattlesnake.

1. Walk only on clear paths and trails, especially during the day and don't reach where you can't see.
2. In the evenings keep a watchful eye on the asphalt or on fallen plant debris.
3. If you hear a rattle, STOP and locate where it is coming from, then move slowly in the opposite direction until clear
 - a. A snake's striking distance is about $\frac{1}{2}$ their total length.
4. Don't attempt to pick up or handle wild snakes.

FIRST AID: If you are bitten call 911 immediately, follow their instructions, then call Security at 619-482-6114 so they can assist emergency crews once they arrive.

If possible, take these steps while waiting for medical help:

- Remain calm and move beyond the snake's striking distance.
- Remove jewelry and tight clothing before you start to swell.
- Position yourself, if possible, so that the bite is at or below the level of your heart.
- Clean the wound, but don't flush it with water. Cover it with a clean, dry dressing.

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Caution

- Don't use a tourniquet or apply ice.
- Don't cut the wound or attempt to remove the venom.
- Don't drink caffeine or alcohol, which could speed your body's absorption of venom.
- Don't try to capture the snake. Try to remember its color and shape so that you can describe it, which will help in your treatment.

Snakes are cold blooded like all reptiles and are less aggressive when they get cold. During winter when temperatures are on average below 60 deg. most snakes will burrow in and hibernate until warmer weather. If the average temperature is above 60 deg. the hungry snakes will start coming out. During the day when it is warm the snakes will mostly stay to the shadows in shade. When it is cool in the evening snakes will seek out warmth when the sun goes down and you can often find them on the black top roads absorbing the residual heat of the day before heading back underground. In the summer when the temperatures are continually warm you can find snakes out at all times of the day and night.

Snakes love to hide and ambush their prey. You need to be very careful around places they can hide. Remember to keep an eye out when moving items that have been on the ground for a long time. Be extra careful when rummaging through sheds, old lumber or junk piles and even in and around portable toilets. Do not walk through brush or high weeds and grass during snake season; it is not the time to trail blaze.

Here at the Chula Vista Elite Athlete Training Center most often Security is called to deal with snakes. **The first thing to remember is that when Security responds, we need to know where the snake is so someone should remain in the area to point us in the right direction.** Remember in the evenings they seek out warmth so keep dorm room, locker room, and laundry room doors closed, especially where the doors are close to vegetation.

Snakes are a vital part of our ecosystem and the rattlesnakes are very important, keeping the snake and rodent populations in check. The other non-venomous snakes, skinks and lizards also keep the insects and smaller rodents at bay.

We here at the CVEATC Security we do all in our power to not harm any snakes. We capture and remove rattlesnakes from the property and will relocate other non-venomous snakes away from where people are.

If you are out walking and come across a rattlesnake call Security at 619-482-6114 and the patrol officer will respond to remove the snake. If you are out and come across a non-venomous snake don't worry just let them be if they are not within rooms or offices. And if it has legs it isn't a snake it is ...

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Skinks & Lizards:



Alligator Lizard



Skink

Upon occasion Security has been called to get a snake when it is only a harmless skink or lizard. The thing to remember is if it doesn't rattle it is most often not dangerous. Again, if it has legs it isn't a snake. If you find one of these in your room or office call ACI or Facilities to get them out.

Skinks are often times mistaken for short snakes as they look very similar but they have legs and are only 8 to 12 inches long. They are very docile and will often freeze in place if encountered.

Some of our lizards here have grown very long tails and these tails sticking out from under something can be mistaken for a snake. Remember if it doesn't rattle is isn't venomous here in Southern California so just the tail alone should let you know you are in no danger. The lizards here are between 3 and 8 inches long and are quite harmless. They will most often run away and hide if you come close to them.

Remember also that you are the giant to these animals and are more scared of you. This is why a rattlesnake will coil up and rattle; it is afraid of you. If you do not approach and leave them alone, most of the time they will leave you alone.

Again, never attempt to pick up a wild snake!

Non-Venomous Snakes



California King Snake



Garter Snake



Gopher Snake

The Non-Venomous snakes are, for the most part very shy and will take off if you come around them. However, some like the California king snake are very aggressive. The king snakes grow rather large and they don't like being messed with. They will coil and strike like a rattle snake if cornered. Kings grow up

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to 4 feet long and have thick bodies. They often have muted grey and black bands but some have vivid white and black bands.

The garter snakes move very fast and often time look like a greenish black streak as they rush away from you. These snakes can get long but for the most part are only 2 to 3-foot-long and very slender with shiny skin. These snakes are mostly green with black stripes running the length of the body. Some have black and red striping.

The gopher snake can resemble a rattle snake in their rocky sandy grey coloring but do not have the typical diamond patterns but rather are very well camouflaged for their surroundings. They are very skittish but will get aggressive if cornered. They grow to just around 2 to 3 feet long.

Other Crawly Things

Insects, Spiders and Ticks

- To protect yourself from biting and stinging insects, wear long pants, socks, and long-sleeved shirts.
- Use insect repellents that contain DEET or Picaridin.
- Treat bites and stings with over-the-counter products that relieve pain and prevent infection.
- Avoid fire ants; their bites are painful and cause blisters.
- Severe reactions to fire ant bites (chest pain, nausea, sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling or slurred speech) require immediate medical treatment.

Rodents and Wild or Stray Animals

- Dead and live animals can spread diseases such as Rat Bite Fever and Rabies.
- Avoid contact with wild or stray animals (the CVEATC has plenty of raccoons that should be avoided).
- Avoid contact with rats or rat-contaminated buildings. If you can't avoid contact, wear protective gloves and wash your hands regularly.
- Call Security to get rid of dead animals as soon as possible.
- If bitten/scratched, get medical attention immediately.