

Venomous Snakes

The rattlesnake is California's only native venomous snake. Nine species are found in various areas of the state from below sea level to about 11,000 feet. Their size may vary, and adults of some species may reach six feet in length. Rattlesnakes are an important part of the ecosystem, feeding on rodents, birds, and other small animals.

Familiarize yourself with the rattlesnakes in the area you will be working before starting work by completing a jobsite safety inspection, so you know where to look and identify where rattlesnakes may be hiding. Areas of concern include stored/stacked materials, vaults, manhole and meter boxes.

If you see any snake, leave it alone, and maintain a distance of at least six feet between you and the snake. Do not attempt to move it yourself or scare the snake to make it flee as this could lead to a snake bite. Only professionals should handle snakes. The contact to call and arrange for rattlesnake removal is (*insert name and contact information*).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the last line of defense against hazards. Additional layers create a barrier between the snake and your skin.

Identification and Background

Rattlesnakes are poisonous snakes known for their rattling tails. You may not always hear a rattling sound despite having a rattlesnake nearby. Throughout their lifespan from the moment they hatch, rattlesnakes contain poisonous venom. Their bites can be very dangerous and sometimes deadly. Rattlesnakes are commonly found in overgrown, remote, rocky, and rural areas, and along walking trails.

Snakebite Protective Gaiters



Gaiters are made from puncture-resistant materials to prevent snake bites. Available through [Grainger.com](https://www.grainger.com) and other suppliers.

[Rattlesnakes - UC Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\) Resource](#)

[About Rattlesnakes - California Poison Control System](#)

[Video - Rattlesnake Safety California Poison Control System](#)



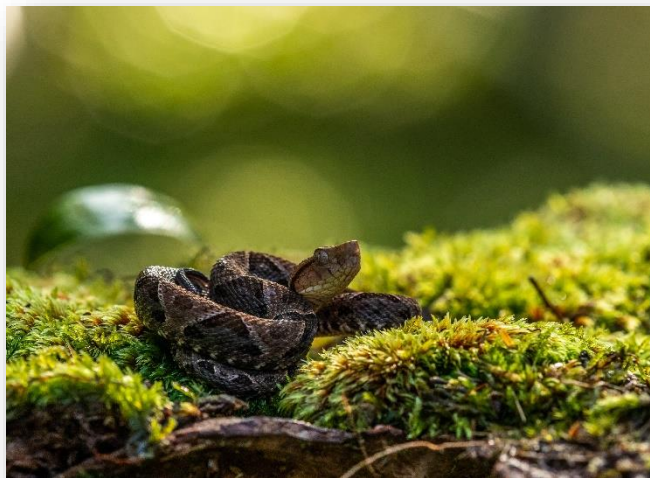
Employer and Worker Recommendations Best Practices and Precautions

Most bites occur between the months of April and October when snakes and humans are most active outdoors. About 25 percent of the bites are “dry,” meaning no venom was injected, but the bites still require medical treatment. Depending on weather and threatening conditions such as wildfires or flooding; rattlesnakes may roam at any time of the day or night. If working at night, be sure to use a flashlight.

To avoid rattlesnake bites some safety precautions will help:

- Wear appropriate over-the-ankle work boots, thick socks, and loose-fitting long pants. Never go barefoot or wear sandals when walking through wild areas.
- PPE like leather gloves, snake gaiters or chaps should be available for those working outdoors in remote areas prone to rattlesnakes.
- When walking in remote areas, stick to well-used walkways, paths, or trails.
- Avoid tall grass, weeds, and heavy underbrush where snakes may hide during the day.
- Look at your feet to watch where you step and do not put your foot in or near a crevice where you cannot see.
- Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see and avoid wandering around in the dark.
- If a fallen tree or large rock is in your path, step up on to it instead of over it, as there might be a snake on the other side.
- Be especially careful when picking up debris, moving rocks or gathering tools or materials that have been stored on the ground. Areas of concern include stored/stacked materials, vaults, manhole and meter boxes.
- Check out areas before sitting down and shake out clothing before putting back on.
- Do not turn over rocks or logs. If you must move a rock or log, use shovels, wear gloves, and roll it toward you, giving anything beneath it the opportunity to escape in the opposite direction.

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Venomous Snake Bites - Symptoms and First Aid

Workers should immediately seek medical attention as soon as possible (dial 911 or call local Emergency Medical Services [EMS]).

[Venomous Snake Bites: Symptoms and First Aid - NIOSH](#)
[How to Prevent Venomous Snakebites - What an Employer can do \(NIOSH\).](#)

Toolbox Topics

VectorSolutions First Aid - Snake Bites.
Duration: 0.25 Hrs.

Bites from snakes of any type can be hazardous and require first aid. This is especially true with bites from poisonous snakes. This course focuses on first aid for bites from the four most common poisonous snakes in the United States: rattlesnakes, water moccasins, coral snakes, and copperheads. Information focuses on snake identification, bite prevention, and proper first aid.

[Snake Safety - US Forest Service](#)
[Venomous Snakes: Employer and Worker Recommendations - NIOSH](#)

