

Rattlesnake Information

Generally, rattlesnakes emerge from hibernation in March or April, or when the average daytime temperatures reach and remain about 60F and higher. The snakes are then most active when the temperatures are between 80-90F. This means that the snakes may be active most of the day during the spring, and during the early mornings and late afternoons throughout the summer. Exposure to temperatures above 110F for more than a few minutes is enough to kill a rattlesnake; therefore, during the hottest part of summer, snakes are seldom observed, except occasionally at night.

Snake activity picks up again as temperatures begin to fall in late summer and early autumn before they go into hibernation as early as September or as late as December.

Young snakes may inject more venom than an adult snake and some cannot yet use their rattles.

Snakes are reclusive creatures and generally will avoid humans if given the opportunity. Always look where you're stepping, sitting or reaching. If you happen to encounter a rattlesnake while on the range, back away from it. Give any snake on the range a wide berth. Wearing boots helps protect your feet and also the vibrations from your heavier boots will be felt by snakes and can help to scare them away.

Identification

A rattlesnake has a triangular head that is notably larger than the neck. The body is thick, dull, and non-glossy. The tail is blunt with one or more rattles.

Warning Signs

You may hear the rattlesnake before you see it. A rapid vibration of its tail makes a buzz much like the sound of sizzling grease. This is how the snake warns you that it feels threatened by your presence.

A snake can strike up to 1/2 its body length but that can vary greatly.

General DOs if bitten:

- **DO** wash the bite area gently with soap and water to remove any residual venom on the skin and cover with a light bandage. These items are on the range in the first aid kits.
- **DO** identify the type of snake, if you can. If you have a camera with you, snap a photo from a safe distance.
- **DO** remove watches, bracelets, rings, and any other worn objects that could constrict a swelling extremity.
- **DO** remain calm. The faster the victim's heart rate is, the more quickly the venom will spread. The vast majority of rattlesnake bite victims survive. The calmer they remain, the better their chances.
- Keep the bite area **BELOW** the level of the heart.
- **DO** get to help as soon as possible. The single best first aid tool for snakebite is a phone and a set of car keys.

General DON'Ts if bitten:

- **DON'T** attempt to capture or kill the snake. The snake is already highly agitated and you're risking another bite. Take care of yourself or others' injuries first.
- **DON'T** apply a tourniquet or icepack to the bite area. For most snakebites the major threat is tissue damage, and applying ice or tying a tourniquet will likely make the damage worse.
- **DON'T** "cut and suck." The old-style snakebite kits are worthless at removing venom, and they can increase the risk of infection or tissue damage.
- **DON'T** act recklessly in an attempt to reach medical assistance. If you are alone, get to the road and call for an ambulance. The range address is 4651 Tapo Canyon Road inside of the Tapo Canyon Park. If driving call ahead to the emergency room if possible to let them know you are coming in with a snakebite victim.

Hope this helps as a general information guide. Be safe out there and enjoy the range!

