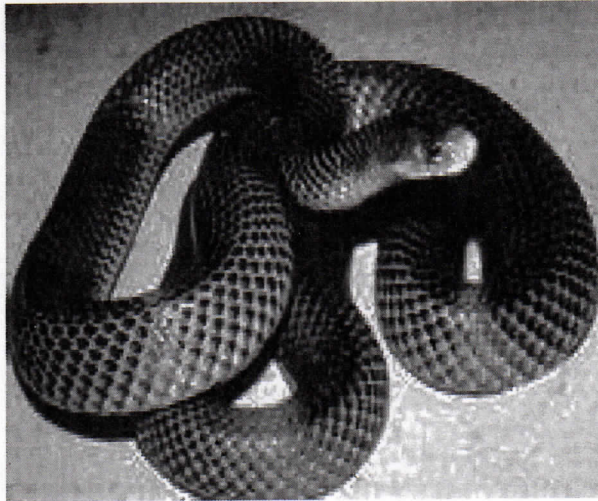


## HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE Snake Awareness

09/11/ 2009

Recently there has been a spate of snake sightings reported at various SP Ausnet sites. In particular Terminal Stations in rural areas of the state seem to be more prone to the visitation by snakes, as they are generally surrounded by open farm land and/or bushland. Some terminals and zone sub stations are also located adjacent to waterways which also attract snakes.



One of the privileges of being Australian is getting to share this wide brown land of ours with some of the world's most painful and poisonous creatures. Did you know that of the planet's top ten most deadly snakes, Australia has them all? Lucky us!

As the warmer weather increases, we Aussies tend to spend more time in the outdoors, (including those of us who work outside) unfortunately as the heat of summer rises, so does the incidence of humans coming across certain legless creatures that can give a nasty shock to unsuspecting individuals. Snakes, like many reptiles, are cold-blooded animals, so in the summer months they tend to be more active as their warmer blood means they don't have to sleep as much.

Interestingly, many people don't always know if they've even been bitten by a snake. Some victims describe it as a bump, with no sudden pain. If you are in snake country and feel unwell then check yourself for scratches and puncture marks. There could also be bruising, bleeding or swelling around the wound.

Each year there are around 3000 people bitten by snakes and while almost all are successfully treated there are one to two deaths a year

Australian snakes inflict bites that send poison spreading closer to the surface of the skin through the lymphatic system, so we treat snake bites differently than they do in other parts of the world.

On the next page is a few handy tips on how to best avoid an unhappy encounter, however, should you accidentally come closer than intended, there is also a summary of the first aid treatment for snake bite.

**For Further Information Contact: Peter Hertzog  
Network Safety & Environment Manager 0429 024431**

## HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE

# Snake Awareness

09/11/ 2009

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### How to Reduce the Risk

- Avoid walking through long grass.
- If you intend to do the above wear long pants and rugged boots.
- Be careful when gardening (wear gloves), or clearing wood piles - they are great places for snakes to sleep.
- Stay on paths.
- Watch where you step.
- Leave snakes alone - they may see you as a threat. Many bites occur when people try to kill snakes.

### How to Deal With Snake Bites

- Do not wash the wound - the venom needs to be analysed so leave it as is.
- Place a folded pad over the wound.
- Immobilise the limb with a firm bandage - about the same firmness you would for a sprained ankle.
- Do not cut off blood supply - the tourniquet approach is wrong.
- Put a splint on the limb.
- If bite occurs on a victim's torso - apply pressure bandage as well.
- The same goes for head, neck and back wounds.
- Call an ambulance 000.

**Remember:** Snake bite modules and instructions are included in all field first aid kits.

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