

# SAFETY ALERT

HSE-ALERT-009

**Date:** 16 November, 2016

**Area of Concern:** All Staff and All Students

## Snake Season

The warmer weather, particularly at this time of year means that snakes become active and occasionally a snake will cross paths with a human.



### Facts

- A snake bite will result from a snake being frightened, surprised or cornered.
- Some snakes are naturally docile, some naturally agitated and all will defend themselves if escape is not possible.
- Australian snakes can differ in colour leading to misidentification.
- Chemical analysis of the venom around the bite site is used for identification.
- Australian snake venom does not enter the blood stream first. It enters the lymphatic stream, then works its way through the lymphatic system into the blood.
- You can speed the process up by moving around or slow it down by staying still.

### Do's

- Contact a local Snake Catcher if required. They may be found by searching the yellow pages and may remove the snake for a fee.

#### ***When working outdoors ensure you:***

- Stay on the paths or tracks that you can see.
- Carry a first aid kit that contains the appropriate bandages.
- Wear protective clothing such as covered shoes and trousers.
- Carry a torch at night so you can see where you are going.

### Don'ts

- Don't attempt to capture or injure a snake (this will put you at a higher risk of being bitten).
- Don't leave food scraps out (rats and birds attract snakes).
- Don't leave building equipment in a mess e.g. piles of timber can create warm shelters for snakes if not stacked properly.
- Do not put hands or feet in or under logs or rocks without checking that there is no snake there first.
- Don't Panic!

For information on what snakes live near you, have a look at the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection [website](#).

### What to do if bitten

- Do not panic, it is unlikely the bite will be life-threatening
- Call 000 for an ambulance
- Use the [pressure-immobilisation technique](#), and have the patient taken immediately to the emergency department of the nearest hospital.

**If you see a snake on the JCU Campus contact Security on:**

- **Townsville Security:** 07 4781 5555 or 1800 675 559
- **Cairns Security:** 07 4232 1293 or 0419 677 874