

SAFETY ALERT

WHS-ALERT-007-2016

Date: 16 November, 2016

Area of Concern: All Staff and Students



Snake Season

Snakes become more active from their mating season in September and into the warmer months. With snakes becoming more active, it is likely that 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 (*check the yellow pages*) or if on campus contact Security (*contact details below*).

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:** 07 478 15555 or 1800 675 559
- **Cairns Security:** 07 423 21293 or 0419 677 874