**DISTRIBUTION & APPEARANCE**

**BEHAVIOR & HABITATS**

- Sit and wait patiently during the day; remain secluded next to a regularly used animal path, and wait silently for prey to cross within striking distance.
- Active hunters at night and during rainy, overcast days; most active on calm, warm nights.
- Trail rattles in clumps to warn off intruders.
- Some species are relatively docile while others are quite aggressive when approached.
- Common in areas with abundant rodents; often found near farms and towns.
- During winter months, rattlesnakes hibernate in groups in rocky outcroppings, tree stumps, or animal burrows.

**VENOM & EFFECTS**

- Rattlesnakes use their venom to capture and digest their prey.
- Venom is delivered through long, hollow fangs at the front of the mouth.
- Large rattlesnake species are especially dangerous. They can strike about 1/3 to 1/2 their body length, inflict deep puncture wounds, and inject large amounts of venom.
- It is possible to be bitten by a rattlesnake and not be poisoned, since the snake does not depend on injected venom. What a rattlesnake depends on is the size of its prey
- Rattlesnake venom is a complex mixture of compounds that destroy blood cells and muscle tissues and prevent wounds from healing.
- Snakable victims may experience nausea, a full in blood pressure, weakness, rapid pulse, shortness of breath, vomiting, and kidney failure.
- There may be severe swelling, blistering, bleeding and necrosis at the bite site.
- Necrosis of skin, cartilage and muscle tissue can occur around the bite site.
- Death from internal bleeding, muscle paralysis or shock can result from a severe bite left untreated.
- Rattlesnakes are avoidable that the symptoms of the venom of North American rattlesnakes.

**IDENTIFICATION**

All of the rattlesnakes found in North America are pit vipers. They are divided between two genera, Crotalus and Sistrurus, based on the size of the head scales between the eyes. Different species vary widely in adult size: some reach barely 2 feet in length while others can grow to 9 feet.

**FIRST AID**

- Stay calm.
- Move victim and onlookers away from the snake.
- Help the victim lie down, reassure and calm the victim.
- Remove constraining items such as jewelry, watches, rings, or shoes.
- Immobilize the bitten part of the body and place in a comfortable position.
- Record the appearance and progress of the symptoms.
- Take the victim to the nearest medical facility as soon as possible.
- Retain snake for identification. Kill it without destroying the head.

**PREVENTION**

- Assume that any snake you encounter is venomous. Leave snakes alone. Many people are bitten because they try to kill a snake or get a closer look at it.
- As tactical situations permit, avoid high risk snake habitats. Locate bunkers away from piles of brush, rocks, or other debris.
- Get rid of things that attract snakes. Remove woodpiles, rock piles, construction debris, dumps, dead undergrowth, and similar shelter for snakes. Store supplies elevated off the ground. Practice good sanitation. Control rodents.
- Practice “SAFE-SMART” behavior: Blake out bedding and clothing before use. Sweep off the ground if possible. Wear thick leather boots for the first 30 minutes, then walking along. Keep to clear paths.
- Be alert to areas where snakes may be hiding or nesting. Don’t reach or place parts of your body into places you cannot see into directly, especially in high grass or among rocks. Keep heels off of rock ledges. Never sit on or step on large rocks or logos without first checking to see what is on the other side.
- When walking on paved roadways at night, use a flashlight and avoid walking along shoulders or medians.
- In the unit compound, keep doors, windows, and vents closed whenever possible. Block holes in foundations, crawl spaces, crawl spaces, and other cracks.
- Do not pick up a “dead” snake; it may only be stunned, stunned, or playing dead. Even a recently killed snake can bite through reflex action. Use a stick, a rag, or other container, and do not handle the head when transporting a dead snake that needs to be identified.