



**Access**

*Professional Development*

**SNAKE CAPTURING AND RELOCATION  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

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### 1. PURPOSE

1.1 \_\_\_\_\_ (Company Name - here forth referred to only as the “Company”) has a responsibility to provide a working environment that is safe and without risk to health & safety, as far as is reasonably practicable according to the Occupational Health & Safety Act 85 of 1993. In light of this, The Company has introduced this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to outline the process to eliminate/reduce possible injury to a person or damage to the environment or infrastructure in the event of discovering a snake on-site.

### 2. SCOPE

This SOP applies to all employees, contractors, and visitors undertaking procedures and activities on the property of the Company.

### 3. PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Various snakes are naturally distributed throughout the property of the Company and surrounding area and encounters between snakes and humans will be a continuous hazard for both parties involved.
- 3.2 In an attempt to decrease the number of human-snake interactions we will reduce the number of suitable environments for snake occupation and population support as far as is reasonably practicable and environmentally acceptable. We have introduced good housekeeping practices which include, but are not limited to:
  - Timeously and appropriately means of rubbish disposal (e.g. food scraps, etc.);

- Timeously and appropriately means of unused material disposal (e.g. scrap metal, building rubble, tyres, etc.);
- Keeping external doors of building closed at all times;
- Ensuring that grass on the property is kept neat and trimmed;
- Trimming bushes and trees away from building windows and roofs;
- Ensuring that water plants (e.g. reeds) are continuously removed along waterways;
- Ensuring that ground cover plants near pathways are removed;
- Controlling rodent populations in an ethical and environmentally friendly manner.

3.3 South African indigenous wildlife is protected by the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 and the Animal Protection Act 71 of 1962 amongst others.

3.4 Any person capturing, removing, or relocating a snake on the property of the Company must be in possession of a valid Snake Identification, Handling and Snakebite Treatment training certificate.

3.5 All staff selected as Snake Handlers by the Company will be sent on Snake Identification, Handling and Snakebite Treatment training and is both the responsibility of The Company and the snake handler to ensure that the training certificate remains current.

3.6 Any trained and current snake handler who is requested to do a snake capture, removal, or relocation must have a qualified First Aider, or someone higher qualified, accompany them during the capture and relocation process.

3.7 If any person on the property encounters a snake that causes concern they are advised to:

- Remain calm and warn anyone in the immediate vicinity;
- Do not try and capture or kill the snake;
- Keep an eye on the snake so that it doesn't disappear but do not harass it;
- Notify security by calling \_\_\_\_\_ or the Safety Officer on \_\_\_\_\_;
- Calmly wait on-site, where it is safe to do so until a qualified snake catcher can come and remove the snake;
- Provide information regarding the location and the time that the snake was encountered and any other information that may be useful like size and colour or patterning;
- Where a snake is located in or relocates to a room or building, try and contain the snake within the location, if possible. This can be achieved by closing doors and windows, and blocking escape routes like gaps under the door with towels or other acceptable items;
- Where a snake was successfully enclosed, place a "No Entry" sign on the door and warn others approaching about the hazard. Remain in the vicinity until the snake handler arrives;
- Where a snakebite occurred and medical treatment is required, The Company's First Aiders are trained and qualified to deal with the initial prehospital interventions for snakebite while arrangements are made for the victim to be transported by company transport or an ambulance from an approved Emergency Medical Care provider;

- Where a company-appointed snake handler is not available, an alternative should be sought by contacting a local removal specialist who is in possession of a Catch and Release permit from the local Nature Conservation office.

### **Appointment of Snake Handlers**

- 3.8 The Health and Safety Manager will conduct a formal risk assessment of the workplace and surrounding property to establish the need for qualified snake handlers on-site. Once the need has been established the Health and Safety Manager will make a recommendation regarding the number of snake handlers that will be required and the level of service that these individuals will be providing in the workplace.
- 3.9 Employees who are nominated and agree to undertake the role of on-site snake handlers will obtain approval from their direct supervisor. Once permission has been obtained, these candidates will have to complete a Snake Identification, Handling and Snakebite Treatment course as well as a First Aid Level 1 course.
- 3.10 All candidates will be appointed in writing for a duration of two (2) years, or until their certificates expire.
- 3.11 All Company appointed snake handlers will be retrained in “Snake Identification, Handling and Snakebite Treatment” at least every 2 years. Where snake handlers do not actively perform snake-handling duties may be trained more regularly (i.e. yearly) to ensure they are still competent to respond to any snake capturing and relocation events.
- 3.12 All appointed snake handlers will undertake the role according to, and within the bounds of, their training and their appointment letters. All snake handlers must ensure that the HR department has certified copies of their training certificates.
- 3.13 The Company will be responsible for all costs associated with the appropriate training and relevant PPE and snake handling equipment as described in Section 8 of the OHS Act 85 of 1993.

### **Capturing and Relocating Snakes**

- 3.13 Appointed Snake Handlers must always ensure that they have the appropriate equipment with them when they have been called to remove a snake. This includes the following:
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) i.e. goggles, gators, snakebite first aid kit
  - Handling equipment i.e. snake hook or tong, snake tube or bucket
- 3.14 Before capturing the snake all snake handlers must ensure that all hazards e.g. bystanders and animals e.g. dogs have been removed from the immediate area to prevent an unwanted snakebite.

- 3.15 Snake handlers must capture the snake humanely and ethically as was taught to him/her during their Snake Identification, Handling & Snakebite Treatment course.
- 3.16 Captured snakes must be kept in pre-approved containers or bags which will not allow escape. Containers have to be labelled as “DANGER-VENOMOUS SNAKES” to ensure it is clearly visible as to what is inside. Where bags are used all bags must be double tied.
- 3.17 Captured snakes should be kept in a cool, and where possible, dark place until their release which should be as soon as is reasonably practicable or by the end of the shift. Snakes must be released as close to the area in which they were found without posing an immediate threat again (preferably within a 2km radius).
- 3.18 All sightings and captures should be documented and submitted in writing, to the Safety Manager for accurate statistics to be kept as soon as possible but by no later than the end of the shift.
- 3.19 Injured or sick snakes that are beyond the process of rehabilitation should be euthanized immediately by providing a quick but powerful blow to the back of the head. Slightly injured or sick snakes should be quarantined away from other snakes and handed over to a rehabilitation organisation within 24 hours.

## **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Compliance, monitoring, and review**

- 4.1 All personnel on the premises of the Company (including any work that may have to be conducted off-site) have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and those around them to ensure compliance with Health & Safety law.
- 4.2 The Director and the Health & Safety Officer are responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and ensuring compliance with this procedure.

### **Reporting**

- 4.3 All Incidents involving snake sightings or snake handling must be reported to the Safety Officer by the snake handler or the team member who saw the snake as soon as possible but by no later than the end of the shift.
- 4.4 The Safety Officer will complete his report and keep a copy on file for auditing purposes.
- 4.5 Non-compliance with this procedure will be reported and investigated and guilty parties may face disciplinary actions.

## 5. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

- Occupational Health & Safety Act 85 of 1993
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004
- Animal Protection Act 71 of 1962
- [Snakebite Protocol](#)
- [First Aid for Snakebite Protocol](#)
- [Snake Observation Protocol](#)
- [Snake Capturing Protocol](#)
- [Snake Handler Appointment Letter](#)

## 6. APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

<b>DOCUMENT DEVELOPER</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
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<b>APPROVAL &amp; REVIEW</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
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