

STAY ALERT! BE SNAKE-AWARE!

Although it is now Fall, unseasonably warm temperatures continue, as does the risk of encountering snakes. The 7th Civil Engineer Squadron would like to share some important awareness and safety tips about a poisonous snake that lives in the Dyess AFB/Abilene region:



Western Diamondback Rattlesnake

SNAKE FACTS:

Snakes can strike a distance up to one-half their body length.
A snake can still bite if its head has been separated from its body.
A rattlesnake doesn't always "warn" by rattling before striking.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION:

NEVER approach or try to pick a snake up.
Keep yards, gardens and planters free from clutter and leaves.
Maintain decorative shrubs well-trimmed away from bases and the ground.
Remove birdfeeders...bird seed attracts rodents....and rodents attract snakes.
DON'T reach where you can't see.
Stay alert when outdoors, in garages, sheds and barns.
Always check shoes and boots that are left outside before wearing.

IF YOU ARE BITTEN BY A SNAKE:

Move away from the snake.
Call 9-1-1.....a snake bite IS a medical emergency.
Try to remember what the snake looked like; color, length, distinguishing pattern, etc.
DON'T cut bite area and extract venom with your mouth.
Remove any jewelry and restrictive clothing.
Keep bite area below head and heart.
Remain calm until help arrives.



Western Diamondback Rattlesnake *Crotalus atrox*

-Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes are found throughout the Southwest and are, by far, the most common rattlesnake encountered in Texas.

-Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes can be distinguished from most other rattlesnakes by a series of black and white bands just above their rattles.

-You can't tell how old a rattlesnake is by counting their rattles. They add a rattle with each molt (2 - 3 times/year) and lose older rattles.

-Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes can live to over 20 years.

-These rattlesnakes use venom to immobilize their prey that includes birds, reptiles, and small mammals. The venom is mainly hemotoxic and attacks the victim's blood system.

-Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes have heat sensing pits in their faces that help them find their warm blooded prey even in the dark.

-In the American Southwest, Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes account for more human bites than any other rattlesnake.



-The average length of an adult Western Diamondback Rattlesnake is 4 to 6 feet.

-Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes have been known to swim through water or climb a short distance into a tree when necessary to pursue prey.

-Like many rattlesnakes, these hibernate in groups in small caves or abandoned burrows.

-Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes give birth to live babies that begin to live independently shortly after birth.