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PRECAUTIONS WITH SNAKES

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In periods of natural disaster, such as during and following storms and flooding, snakes are forced into areas where they are not commonly found. The following precautions are offered to prevent snake bite under storm and flood conditions.

Be alert for snakes in unusual areas. They may be found in or around homes, barns, outbuildings, driftwood, levees, dikes, dams, stalled automobiles, piles of debris, building materials, trash or any type of rubble or shelter. Keep a firearm, heavy stick or some weapon handy when you are stranded by high water.

When you are involved in rescue operations or when you return to your place of business or home following a natural disaster, make a thorough search to locate and eradicate poisonous snakes before beginning cleanup operations. They may be under or near ANY type of protective cover.

When moving about after dark or in darkened areas, use a strong light so that you can avoid close encounters with snakes.

During and following storms or floods, impress upon children the dangers of snakes under such conditions. Explain to them in detail the precautions they must follow.

In rescue or cleanup operations, wear high-topped boots of heavy leather or rubber. Wear the trouser leg outside the boots because any type of material may help prevent fang penetration of a poisonous snake.

Remove debris (such as driftwood, trash, lumber, roofing material, tree stumps, etc.) from your premises. This will eliminate shelter which might be attractive to snakes or to rats and mice upon which they feed. Be extremely careful around debris, however. Use rakes, pry bars or other long-handled tools when removing debris. Never expose your hands, feet or other parts of your body in a place where a snake might be.

When you kill a poisonous snake, use a stick, rake or other long-handled tool to carry the snake away for disposal. The snake may bite even when it appears dead.

If you suddenly realize you are very near a snake, avoid sudden movement. If you remain still, the snake may leave. If the snake does not move away, back from it very slowly. If you see or hear a snake nearby and you make a sudden movement, it likely will strike.

Keep at least one snake bite kit in your home, ready for emergency. Learn how to use it when it is purchased (the directions usually come in or on the container). If you or someone near you is bitten by a poisonous snake, call or send for a doctor and immediately give first aid for snake bite by following the printed instructions with the snake bite kit.

Know how to identify poisonous snakes so that first aid for poisonous bites will be administered only when a person is bitten by a poisonous species.

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