TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-VEN · Snakes, Spiders and Venomous Creatures Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: Workers and supervisors who work outdoors, on farms, grounds and bushland, under buildings, in roof spaces or in sheds and storage areas · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 22 November 2026

For anyone who works outdoors, on farms and grounds, under buildings or in sheds: where snakes, spiders and other venomous creatures shelter, how to avoid bites and stings, and what to do if someone is bitten or stung.

Snakes, spiders, bees, wasps, ants, ticks, scorpions and centipedes share many workplaces: paddocks and long grass, gardens and bushland, woodpiles, sheds, pits, under buildings and in roof spaces. Most bites and stings happen when someone reaches, steps or sits without looking, or tries to catch or kill a snake. Some can be life-threatening, and a severe allergic reaction to a sting can be too.

This talk covers where venomous creatures shelter, the controls that prevent bites and stings (clearing and tidying, looking before you reach, boots, gaiters, long trousers and gloves, and leaving snakes to a licensed snake catcher), and first aid in general terms: call emergency services, keep the person still and calm, for a snake bite in Australia a pressure immobilisation bandage, and the person's own action plan for a severe allergy. It is awareness, not first aid training or snake handling training.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Name the places at work where snakes, spiders and other venomous creatures shelter, and the times of year and day they are most active
- Explain why most bites and stings happen: reaching, stepping or sitting without looking, and trying to catch or kill a snake
- Use the controls: clearing and tidying, looking before you reach or lift, and boots, gaiters, long trousers and gloves
- Leave a snake alone, move away, warn others and call a licensed snake catcher through the site's process
- Respond to a bite or sting: call emergency services, keep the person still and calm, and give first aid as trained, including a pressure immobilisation bandage for a snake bite in Australia
- Know who has a severe allergy plan, where the first aid kit and trained first aiders are, and report every bite, sting and sighting

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What it covers

Module	Covers
Why it matters	Where venomous creatures shelter; How bites and stings happen; Severe allergic reactions
Controls that work	Clearing, tidying and design; Look before you reach; Boots, gaiters, long trousers and gloves
Your part	Leave snakes alone; First aid in general terms; Report it

Activities

- Spot the risk: workers look at four jobs, from clearing a woodpile to crawling under a building, and decide where a bite or sting could happen and how to prevent it
- What would you do: workers decide what to do in four situations, from a snake in the shed doorway to a workmate stung by a bee who starts to feel unwell

What is in the package

Item	File
Editable PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, plus PDF	02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION/Training Presentation.pptx and .pdf
Facilitator guide with a running sheet, discussion prompts and model answers	03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE/Facilitator Guide.docx and .pdf
Participant handout with the key points to take away	04_PARTICIPANT_HANDOUT/Participant Handout.docx and .pdf
Attendance record form, to capture who attended, when, and who facilitated	06_RECORDS/Attendance Record.docx and .pdf
Excel attendance register	06_RECORDS/Attendance Register.xlsx
Multiple-choice theory assessment, to record understanding if your business wants to	05_ASSESSMENT/Theory Assessment.docx and .pdf
Answer key for the assessment	05_ASSESSMENT/Assessment Answer Key.docx and .pdf
Certificate template	06_RECORDS/Certificate Template.docx
Start here: Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (four PDFs)

What you need to deliver it

- A facilitator such as a supervisor, leading hand or WHS adviser who has read the facilitator guide and knows your site's arrangements for the topic
- A screen or projector, or printed slides or handouts: it works in a crib room, site office or on a video call
- Your own site procedures for the topic, to point to during the session

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Questions

Does it teach first aid for bites and stings? No. It states first aid in general terms only: call emergency services, keep the person still and calm, for a snake bite in Australia a pressure immobilisation bandage as first aid training teaches, and the person's own action plan for a severe allergy. It is not first aid training. Make sure trained first aiders and suitable first aid kits are on hand, and add your own first aid arrangements.

Can we add our own site procedures and photos? Yes. The slides, handout and guide are editable, and the facilitator guide marks the places to add your own procedures, contacts and photos of your workplace.

Do we have to use the assessment? No. It is there if your business wants a record that each worker understood the key points. The attendance record on its own shows who attended and when.

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TOOLBOX TALK

Snakes, Spiders and Venomous Creatures Awareness

Where venomous creatures shelter, how to avoid bites and stings, and what to do

20–30 minutes · Workers and supervisors who work outdoors, on farms, grounds and bushland, under buildings, in roof spaces or in sheds and storage areas

[Company name] · [Date] · [Facilitator name]

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What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ Where venomous creatures shelter
- ✓ How bites and stings happen
- ✓ Controls that prevent them
- ✓ First aid in general terms

This talk is not

- ✗ First aid training
- ✗ Snake catching or handling
- ✗ Pest control
- ✗ Our first aid plan: **[Our first aid arrangements]**

Awareness only. First aid needs a first aid course. Snakes are caught only by licensed snake catchers.

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Where they shelter, and how bites happen

Most bites and stings happen when a hand or foot goes where you cannot see.

- Long grass, scrub, woodpiles and rubbish
- Sheds, pits, meter boxes and stored gear
- Under buildings and in roof spaces
- Boots, gloves and clothes left outside
- Bees and wasps: nests in walls, trees and ground

A composite example

- A groundsman reaches under a pile of old fence posts to drag one out, without gloves.
- He feels a sharp sting on his hand. He did not see what bit him, so his crew treat it as a snake bite and call for help.

If you cannot see it, do not put your hand there.

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Duties under health and safety laws

The business must

- Identify where bites and stings could happen
- Keep work areas cleared and tidy
- Provide PPE, first aid and a way to call for help
- Train workers and plan for emergencies

You must

- Look before you reach, step or sit
- Wear the boots, gaiters and gloves provided
- Leave snakes alone and warn others
- Report bites, stings and sightings

Most health and safety laws give these duties. Check the law where you work (in Australia, WHS or OHS laws).

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The order of controls for bites and stings

1. **Elimination** Remove woodpiles, rubbish and long grass near work areas
2. **Substitution** Use a tool or machine to lift or move, not hands
3. **Isolation** Seal gaps; keep doors shut; screens and covers
4. **Engineering** Lighting, raised storage, sealed pits and meter boxes
5. **Administrative** Look first, check gear, call a snake catcher, training
6. **PPE** Boots, gaiters, long trousers, gloves

HIGHER ORDER

Higher order controls remove or control the hazard at the source, or put a barrier between people and the hazard.

LOWER ORDER

Lower order controls rely on people to do a thing or wear a thing, every time, tired, distracted or rushed.

Behaviours are not on the hierarchy, but behaviours and culture decide whether every control on it actually works.

Boots and gloves are the last line, not the first.

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TOOLBOX TALK · HAZ-VEN

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Participant handout · keep this

Most bites and stings happen when a hand or foot goes where you cannot see. Keep this page.

The order of controls

1. Remove woodpiles, rubbish and long grass
2. Use a tool or machine to lift and move
3. Seal gaps; keep doors shut
4. Lighting and storage off the ground
5. Look first; shake out boots and gloves
6. Boots, gaiters, long trousers, gloves, last

If you see a snake

- Move away slowly; warn others
- Never try to catch or kill it

First aid in general terms

- Call your local emergency number (000 in Australia); keep the person still and calm
- Snake bite in Australia: pressure bandage as trained

Before you start

- ☐ Can I see where I am putting my hands and feet?
- ☐ Am I wearing boots, gaiters or long trousers, and gloves?
- ☐ Is the grass cut and the area tidy around the job?
- ☐ Do I know where the first aid kit and first aider are?
- ☐ Can I call for help from here, and does someone know where I am?

Severe allergy

- Swelling of the face or throat, trouble breathing
- Follow their plan; autoinjector; call emergency services

Who and how

- **[Our first aid arrangements]; [Who calls a snake catcher]**
- **[Who to report to here]**

Look before you reach. Leave snakes alone. Call for help and keep the person still.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It is not first aid training, snake handling or pest control.

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