



Wildlife Awareness on Job Sites

TOOLBOX TALK: Wildlife Awareness on Job Sites

RATTLIR Safety Series – “Strike Before It Bites”

Purpose

Wildlife encounters can create significant safety risks on job sites, including bites, stings, disease exposure, and physical harm. This toolbox talk provides guidance on recognizing wildlife hazards, preventing encounters, and responding safely when wildlife is present.

Common Wildlife Hazards

- Snakes: Venomous species may hide under equipment, inside cabinets, or in tall grass.
- Insects: Bees, wasps, ants, fleas, mosquitos, and spiders may cause stings, allergic reactions, or illness.
- Large Mammals: Deer, coyotes, wild hogs, or bears may become aggressive when startled.
- Birds of Prey: Can defend nests aggressively and may swoop at workers.
- Rodents: Can carry diseases and damage wiring or stored materials.

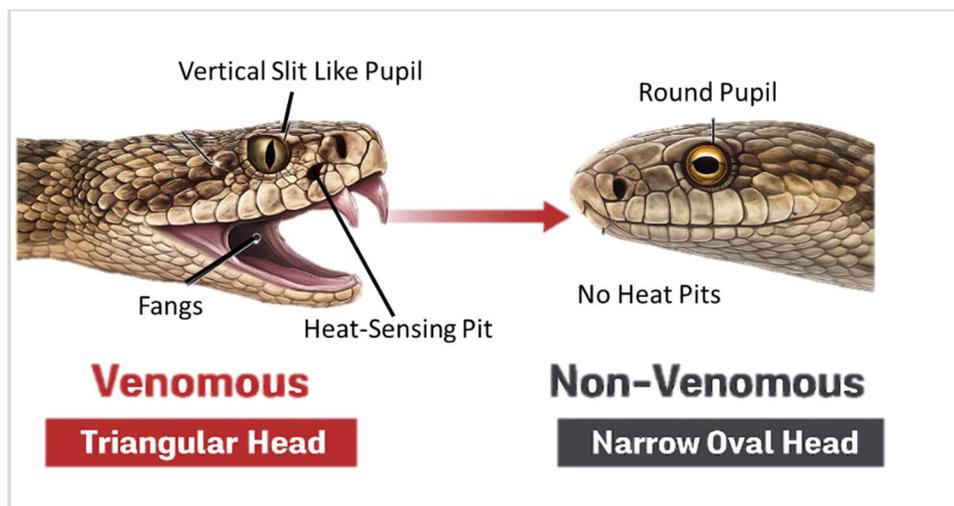


Figure 1 - Venomous vs. Non-Venomous Snake Head Diagram



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Prevention Strategies

- Perform a wildlife sweep before starting work, especially in remote or overgrown areas.
- Avoid placing hands or feet where visibility is limited.
- Keep food, trash, and chemicals secured.
- Wear high-top boots, gloves, and long pants when walking through vegetation.
- Maintain clean job sites with reduced hiding spots.
- Use caution around logs, stacked materials, or debris piles.

If You Encounter Wildlife

- Stay calm – avoid sudden movements.
- Slowly back away and give the animal space.
- Do not attempt to handle, kill, or capture wildlife.
- Stop work in the area and warn others nearby.
- Report nests, dens, or aggressive animals to supervision.
- Contact wildlife control professionals when removal is necessary.

Bite or Sting Response

- Move to a safe area away from the animal.
- Wash bite or sting areas with soap and water.
- Apply cold compresses for swelling.
- Use an epinephrine auto-injector for severe allergic reactions (if prescribed).
- Seek medical attention for venomous bites, unknown species, or significant swelling.
- Report the incident immediately for documentation and follow-up.

Bat Safety Guidelines

- Treat all bats as potentially hazardous – never touch, catch, or handle a bat.
- If a bat is active during the daytime, grounded, or behaving abnormally, consider it potentially rabid.
- Avoid disturbing roosts in structures, rafters, culverts, or equipment storage areas.
- If a bat is flying inside a building or confined space, stop work and contact supervision.
- Prevent access to work trailers, storage buildings, and equipment where bats may roost.
- Cover openings, vents, or gaps in structures to prevent bat entry.



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Discussion Questions

- Have any wildlife sightings occurred recently on or near the job site?
- Are workers familiar with venomous or dangerous species common to this region?
- Do we have a response plan for wildlife encounters or injuries?

RATTLIR Takeaway

Wildlife hazards can appear without warning. Awareness, distance, and calm responses ensure we strike before it bites – literally.