

# Our Dictionary Hill

DHOSA

Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates



## Snake Awareness

We could have called this Snake Alarm, but if we remain aware of our snakes then there should be no need to be alarmed. Nevertheless, 40 people were bitten by snakes in San Diego County last year.

Southern Pacific Rattlesnakes are present on Dictionary Hill and can be dangerous.

Snakes are part of the balance of nature on our hill where they control the rodent population. Please do not kill our snakes. They were living here long before the arrival of humans.

### While Waiting for Emergency Assistance

- Wash the bite with soap and water
- Remove constrictive clothing, watches, rings and jewelry
- Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the heart
- Cover the area with a clean, cool compress or moist dressing
- Monitor vital signs
- Do NOT apply a tourniquet
- Do NOT pack the area in ice packs or heat packs
- Do NOT cut the wound with a knife or razor
- Do NOT use your mouth to suck out venom
- Do NOT let the victim drink alcohol
- Do NOT let the victim do any strenuous activity

Source - City of San Diego Fire and Rescue website

**Local naturalist Jim Merzbacher has years of experience with snakes in our area. He gives us the following expert guidance.**

Wear lightweight ankle high hiking boots. Long pants if you plan on venturing beyond trails edge. Light long sleeves. It is advisable to carry a stick or pole as a barrier.

Don't lift rocks or wood piles where snakes may be attempting to evade detection. Experienced herpetologists may look for them with a snake hook and special equipment to lift objects but will always replace the objects in their exact orientation and location.

Startled rattlers are going to be the most dangerous. The first person spotting any snake should call out "SNAKE", that person should point continuously directly at the snake or its last known location or where it was seen going. The group should stop and not move in any direction if possible until they know which way to move away from the snake's zone. Move slowly and deliberately once the snake has been spotted. **Keep at least six feet away from any snake.** Check that all of your party are aware of the location of the snake. If you are unsure of the identity of a snake then treat it as a rattlesnake.



Pacific Southwest Rattlesnake

Photo: Jim Merzbacher

**To remove snakes from your property, call County Animal Services at (619) 236-2341**

**Keep your dog on a leash. Sniffing in the undergrowth can put them in real danger .**

For more information on Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates call Chris or Sonya Heiserman at (619) 461-1586 [www.dictionaryhill.info](http://www.dictionaryhill.info)