The Mohave Rattlesnake Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

WHERE DO YOU FIND THEM

Mojave rattlesnakes are desert animals. In California, they are found in the desert areas of San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and Kern Counties, as well as the southern edge of Inyo County.

HOW CAN THEY BE IDENTIFIED?

This snake grows to a length of two to four feet. The color varies from shades of brown to pale green depending on the surroundings. It closely resembles the Western Diamondback rattlesnake; both have a dark, diamond pattern down their backs and tails ringed with black and white bands. However, on the Mojave rattlesnake, the white bands tend to be wider than the black and the diamonds fade toward the tail; whereas in the Diamondback, the band width is usually more equal, and the diamonds do not fade so noticeably.

MOJAVE RATTLESNAKES DO NOT CHASE OR ATTACK PEOPLE

Rattlesnakes want nothing to do with people. Mojaves are no different. A large Mojave weighs two pounds.

Most snakebites happen to people who handle or try to kill a snake. The rest are due to people putting their hands and feet where they can’t see or don’t look. Watching where you place your hands and feet and leaving rattlesnakes alone would prevent virtually all rattlesnake bites.

What’s the Danger

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MOJAVE RATTLESNAKE BITE DEVELOP WITHIN A FEW HOURS

- Burning pain at the bite site; presence of noticeable fang marks, which may be single or double set of marks.
- In a majority of cases, snake bites occur on the feet and ankles followed by the hands.
- Skin discoloration: the skin color may change to blue and black.
- Blistering of skin.
- Swelling at the bite site that slowly involves a wider region; the severity of poisoning can be ascertained from the speed at which the swelling progresses up the arm or leg.
- Bleeding from the wound; the oozing blood is thin.
- Sensation of metallic taste in the mouth; salivation.
- Twitching of eye and mouth.
- Paresthesia or tingling sensation and numbness.
- Chills and sweating.
- Anxiety.
- Breathing difficulties.
- Nausea and vomiting.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

MOJAVE RATTLESNAKE BITE PREVENTION

Outdoors:

- Be alert, if you are in snake-infested regions, particularly containing dangerous species of snakes.
- Be on the lookout for snakes and other animals while trekking or hiking; also, if you are with a pet, do not allow the pet to wander away.
- Always allow snakes crossing your path the right of way.
- Always stay on established paths and clearings, while walking in the woods, and grasslands.
- Avoid picking up sticks, stones, or rocks without checking the area for any concealed creatures.
- Always step on top of large rocks and fallen trunks; never place one’s foot by the side of big rocks and rotting tree stumps. Some snake species are known to take shelter or warm

themselves on the sides, during the day.

- Check before sitting on dead tree logs, stumps, or a pile of rocks; use a stick to stir or probe around the area.
- Do not reach out to move or hold bushes or tree branches without properly examining them for any camouflaged creatures such as snakes.
- Watch where you place your hands while climbing a ledge, trees, rocky slopes, or mountains.
- Avoiding being outdoors at night in forested areas; be careful while camping outdoors.
- Avoid tall grassy areas or thick bushes; if you plan to explore the area, use heavy boots and thick pants.
- While walking through areas with thick undergrowth, pay attention to the sound of birds or monkeys that may warn of potential dangers such as snakes.
- While walking outdoors at night, use a flashlight or lamp and make constant noise (singing or talking to others) or large stomping sounds that may alert the snake to move away from the region.
- While walking through tall grass or undergrowth, try to walk one behind the other in a single file.
- Avoid snake-infested regions or even walking on cleared forest paths and roads during nights, immediately after heavy rains that may flush snakes out to the open, due to flooding of their burrows and holes.
- Wildlife explorers, amateur adventurers, and others are requested to carry first aid kit, especially when traveling through areas containing highly venomous snake species.

Residential Settlements

- Keep homes and surrounding areas clean and clear of rubbish or leafy piles, termite mounds.
- Cut tall and unkempt grass or low-lying shrubs and bushes around dwelling areas that provides hiding places.
- In regions where snakes are regular home visitors, always switch on the lights before entering one’s shed or garages (and try to stand clear of exits that may serve as possible escape routes for the snakes).

- Natural disasters, such as floods and forest fires, are known to drive out snakes and other creatures into homes seeking shelter. Hence, always remain vigilant when returning home following such situations.
- Never intentionally run over snakes on the road while on a vehicle (cycle, other 2-wheeler, or 4-wheeler); the injured snake lying on the road may strike other pedestrians or get entangled in the vehicle and be carried to the parking lot or even inside one’s garage.

FINAL WORD

The prognosis of Mojave Rattlesnake Bite is dependent on the size of the snake, site of bite, overall health of the individual, promptness of medical response, and continued observance and treatment of complications.