

VENOMOUS SNAKES OF THE EAGLE FORD

IF YOU GET BIT by a venomous snake, follow your employers' policy. For Validus employees, get to a hospital as quickly and calmly as possible. The suction kits are ineffective and can create more damage. Tourniquets are not needed and will likely lead to more damage and loss of the limb. Absolutely avoid alcohol! The best first aid kit for snakebites are car keys and a cellphone. Try to stay as calm as possible as an accelerated heart rate will cause the venom to circulate through the body faster. There is no need to capture the snake to bring to the hospital- there is only one antivenom for all US snakes (except Coral snakes).

Source: [Texas A&M University](#)



Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes are the most dangerous snake found in our area and probably the country. More fatalities occur from bites from this snake, then any other snake in the country. This is due in part, to their large size, range, and unpleasant attitude. They are very defensive snakes and will normally provide ample warning via the rattle before they strike. However, they do not need to rattle before they strike. These snakes will rely on camouflage before giving away their location by rattling. This is also the second largest rattlesnake in the country. The size is often overstated. Typically, 3 - 4 feet are seen in the San Antonio area, however further south near the Rio Grande Valley, they have been known to reach over 6 feet. They have an extremely potent tissue destroying venom and any bite should be considered a medical emergency.



Broad-banded Copperhead snakes are not very common in our operations. They are more common north and east of South-Central Texas. The Copperhead is responsible for the most venomous snake bites in the country. While bites are usually not life-threatening, they are extremely painful and cause significant tissue damage. A bite from a Copperhead requires hospitalization. Antivenom is not always administered, but recent studies have shown it to reduce tissue damage and long-term effects significantly. One interesting fact about copperheads is they are known to eat invertebrates. There are several documented cases of copperheads swarming an area to eat newly molted. They have also been known to eat large caterpillars. These snakes are also effective rodent predators.



Northern Cottonmouth or Cottonmouth snakes are probably the most misidentified and misunderstood snake in the US. There are many reports of them in the waterways around San Antonio, but they are rarely positively identified. More often than not, what people are seeing are water snakes. South Central Texas is on the western edge of the cottonmouth's range. While they are common east of the area and along the coast, they are not very common in the San Antonio area. They are here, but not as common as most people believe. They prefer slow moving or still, murky waters and do not frequent our clear fast-moving creeks and streams. These snakes get the name Cottonmouth from the white lining inside their mouths that they hold agape as a warning. These snakes are commonly stated to be aggressive. They are in fact not aggressive but are very defensive and will stand their ground but will not give chase like many would have you believe. Given the opportunity to flee, they will usually take that option. The venom of these snakes is a potent hemotoxic and while bites are rare, they are considered a medical emergency that requires administration of antivenom.



Coral Snakes are a highly venomous elapid, related to Cobras and Mambas. The rhyme "Red and Yellow, Kill a Fellow, Red and Black, You're ok Jack" pertains to this snake. The rhyme refers to the color banding. On the Coral snake, the red band typically touches the yellow. On the non-venomous milk snakes, the red band will touch the black bands (Milk snakes are not common in the San Antonio area but can be found south of Pleasanton). Do not rely on the rhyme for identification. There is a population of coral snakes South of San Antonio that is melanistic, meaning they only have black and yellow bands. There are frequently observed individuals that are missing other color bands or sometimes have no bands at all. These snakes are quite common in our area of operations. These snakes have a powerful neurotoxic venom that can cause severe breathing difficulties.

"Red and Yellow, Kill a Fellow, Red and Black, You're ok Jack"