Washington state summer hiking season is here, bringing unexpected opportunities to interact with native wildlife, including snakes. While the vast majority of snakes found in Washington state are harmless, the **Northern Pacific Rattlesnake is capable of delivering a venomous bite that can be life threatening**. Although typically limited to central and eastern Washington, rattlesnake species may cross into other regions.

### Keeping Safe around Snakes
- Be proactive:
  - Know the name and location of your hiking trail.
  - Hike with a buddy. If you must go alone, hike in areas with cell phone service.
  - Store the Washington Poison Center phone number in your cell phone: **1 (800) 222-1222**.
  - Limit cell phone use to preserve battery life.
- Wear over-the-ankle boots and long, loose hiking pants.
- Use designated trails and carry a walking stick.
- Never step or reach into densely vegetated areas or rocky piles.
- If you encounter a rattlesnake or hear its distinctive rattle, move slowly away.
- Never attempt to investigate or capture a snake.

### In Case of a Snake Bite
- Remain calm. Call 911 or the Washington Poison Center: **1 (800) 222-1222**.
- Restrict the movement of the affected limb.
- Because swelling may occur, remove rings and other constricting items from the limbs.
- Never attempt to extract the snake venom from the bite site.
- Never use commercially sold “Snake Bite Kits” or venom extractors. They are not effective and may worsen the tissue damage.
- Do not apply tourniquets or ice packs to the bite site, affected area, or limb.
- Make a visual note of the snake’s description or safely photograph the snake - but do not put yourself at risk.
- Do not attempt to capture the snake.

**Call 911** if you, or another person, has suffered a snake bite and are experiencing difficulty breathing, face swelling, or loss of consciousness.