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.

STAYING SAFE AROUND SNAKES
- Be proactive:
  - Know the name and location of your hiking trail
  - Hike with a buddy. If you hike alone, check cell phone service or carry a satellite emergency device
  - 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 moving the affected limb
- Because swelling may occur, remove rings and other constricting items
- 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 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 someone has been bitten by a snake & is experiencing difficulty breathing, swelling around the face, or loss of consciousness