

Copperhead Snakes

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For certain workers there can be a very real opportunity to encounter venomous snakes. Any of the following work could expose individuals to the dangers of snakes:

- Forestry
- Landscaping
- Tree Trimming
- Grounds Keep
- Site Clearing
- General Housekeeping
- Road Construction
- Response to Natural Disasters

OSHA Standard 1926.21(b)(4) says that in job site areas where harmful plants or animals are present, employees who may be exposed shall be instructed regarding the potential hazards, and how to avoid injury, and the first aid procedures to be used in the event of injury.

Copperhead snakes vary in color from reddish to golden tan with hourglass-shaped colored bands on their body. Adult copperheads are usually 18–36 inches long. Copperheads are often found in wooded areas, forests, among rocks, or near sources of water like swamps, rivers, streams or ponds. Copperhead snakes are not usually aggressive and will often freeze in place and remain motionless until the threat passes.



Workers are more likely to be bitten when they unknowingly step on or very close to a copperhead. Copperheads can be found in Eastern states as far west as Texas.

Remember these tips to avoid and reduce dangers from snakes:

- **Watch** where you place your hands and feet when removing debris and taking care of housekeeping outside. Consider wearing **heavy gloves** especially when working outdoors and dealing with brush, leaves, or piles of lumber. Consider wearing **boots** at least 10 inches high especially if working near water areas where snakes may be present.
- Remember snakes often bite only when threatened. If you **see a snake, step back** and allow it to proceed.
- **If bitten, call 911 immediately! Pay attention** to the color and shape of the snake's head to help with treatment. Have someone take a photo, if possible.
- Keep bite victims calm and reduce movement to slow possible spread of venom. Lay victim down so bite is below level of the heart, cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing. **NEVER cut the wound or attempt to suck out the venom.**

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