

SAFETY BULLETIN

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Venomous Snakes: A Neglected Hazard for Maintenance Staffs

INTRODUCTION

Maintenance staff can experience a number of hazards. One often unexpected hazard is a venomous snakebite. Venomous snakes may be encountered in workplaces

The risk of maintenance staff encounters with venomous snakes outside these areas may increase as changes in local climate allow venomous snake species to expand into ever more favorable habitats.

Additionally, extreme weather events such as heavy rain, floods and droughts, may affect the risk of maintenance staff encounters with venomous snakes,

Cool, dark, protected areas such as under sheds, rubble, stored materials, plant and equipment may attract these creatures.

Other factors affecting human-venomous snake encounters include human encroachment into snake habitat, animal displacement during and after a natural disasters such series of heavy rain, flood and extreme change of temperature.

UNPLEASANT EVENT

An unexpected event occurred on 4th March 2022 at Hangar 75, ATR-72 line, located at designated temporary storage of aircraft passenger seat. Whereby, our maintenance staff encounter a snake slithering under the passenger seats covered up by a canvas. Due to the passenger seats being isolated for far too long. It has create a new atmosphere habitat for a venomous snake.

What Employees Can Do:

1. Be aware of your surrounding environment.
2. If you encounter any snake, do NOT handle it (most bites occur when humans try to catch or kill venomous snakes) – Leave the snake alone and notify other workers of the snake's location and description.
3. Do NOT disregard the bites of small or juvenile venomous snakes. They are born equipped with venom that is just as potent as adult venomous snakes.
4. Wear appropriate PPE and protective clothing such as boots, leather gloves, and long pants when working outdoors.
5. Wear leather gloves and use tools to move brush piles, leaves, wood, metal, and debris by lifting the far side toward you as this creates a barrier between the worker and any venomous snakes.
6. Be aware that snakes are more active in warm weather and at night.
7. Make noise as snakes will tend to avoid it (while snakes do not have external ears, they are equipped with an inner ear that can feel vibrations from noise, e.g. footsteps, voices).

Prevention

1. Minimise the food sources for snakes by removing anything that may attract mice or frogs.
2. Reduce the amount of rubbish and materials where a snake could shelter.
3. On return to the site after the break ensure everyone is made aware of the increased risk of the presence of snakes.
4. Wear gloves and boots when moving stored materials and rubbish as they will give a little protection.
5. An increased awareness and alertness is the best protection, the snake will not be looking for you, so watch for it.
6. Ensure aircraft doors and panels are secured or covered temporarily at the end of the day to prevent unwanted animals entering the aircraft.

If a snake is seen or reported on site;

Note: The area of the snake and work in this area stops until the hazard is removed.

DO NOT approach, attack or otherwise provoke the snake as 95% of those bitten have done this.

REMEMBER - IF PROVOKED IT WILL STRIKE

Hope this will increase awareness and knowledge about the risk that venomous snakes can pose to maintenance staffs. Employees should be aware of the dangers of outdoor work in areas where venomous snakes may be present.

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