Snake Safety in SC and GA

• Most snake species in the Southeast are harmless and all bite only in defense.
• Risk of snakebite is exaggerated. Most bites are easily avoided with common sense and basic safety.
• Snakes do not intentionally chase people. They are much more afraid of us than we should be of them.
• Venomous snakes use their venom primarily to kill prey. They use it as a defense only when they are harassed or handled. Many snake species are essential predators that control rodents and other pests.
• Use common sense. Wear appropriate attire, watch where you step, and do not harass, capture, or attempt to kill snakes.
• ALWAYS watch where you step and place your hands; at night always use a flashlight.
• If you are walking in long grass or thick brush, wear heavy boots and/or snake leggings.
• NEVER pick up a snake unless you are positive it is a harmless species.
• If you see a snake, maintain a safe distance (> 6 feet) – most snake bites occur when people try to capture or kill snakes.
• Familiarize yourself with local venomous and nonvenomous snakes – for information see www.uga.edu/srelherp.

In Case of a Snakebite:

• Keep the victim calm and reassured. Remove all jewelry or watches from affected area.
• Contact local emergency services for transport to a local hospital emergency room. In the CSRA, contact the University Hospital Emergency Room in Augusta, GA, (706-774-5060) and let them know a snakebite victim is on the way. Request that they contact an attending physician experienced in treating snakebite.
• Reduce physical exertion by the victim
• DO NOT cut or ice the affected area or use constricting bands or tourniquets.
• Take note of the snake’s size and appearance (pattern) or take a digital (or cell phone) photo, but DO NOT try to capture or kill the snake.
• Remain calm and await emergency assistance.
Venomous Snakes of South Carolina and Georgia

**Copperhead**
Most common venomous snake
Prefers moist forest/swamp

**Cottonmouth (Water Moccasin)**
Semi-aquatic
Threatening open-mouth display

**Timber/Canebrake Rattlesnake**
Largest rattlesnake in the CSRA
Important consumer of rodents

**Pigmy Rattlesnake**
Less than 2 feet long
Tiny rattle
Prefers open pine forest

**Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake**
Not found in the CSRA
(only towards coast)
Declining - Rare in SC

**Eastern Coral Snake**
Rare – only in dry, sandy areas
Red bands touch yellow

Common Harmless Snakes of South Carolina and Georgia

**Banded Watersnake**
Very common, semi-aquatic

**Black Racer**
Very common, large, fast moving

**Rat Snake - juvenile**
Often enters homes
Adults reach large size

**Eastern Hognose Snake**
Variable in color, spreads neck

**Scarlet Snake**
Small, often falls in swimming pools

see [www.uga.edu/srelherp](http://www.uga.edu/srelherp) for details