



Priority Learning Moment

Industry-Submitted Incident Notification

IN-029-2026 | Snake Bite

This Priority Learning Moment has been submitted to Energy Safety Canada by a company wishing to share a safety lesson.

What Happened?

Worker was bitten by a rattlesnake.

- A worker dismounted an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) to remove a rope that was put across a Texas gate.
- The ATV was left running and the worker's helmet was not removed.
- The worker thought they heard something unfamiliar.
- The worker did not see or hear the rattlesnake and was struck in the lower leg.



Caption: Prairie Rattlesnake (Royal Alberta Museum)



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Why This Matters

Immediate Risk

- Rattlesnake bites can be life-threatening
- Access to medical aid can be delayed due to remote work locations
- Rattlesnakes may remain silent and rely on camouflage, making them difficult to detect.
- Rattlesnakes may not rattle before striking.

Potential Consequences

- Serious injury or fatality

What Prevents This

- Maintaining situational awareness
- Personal protective equipment
- Worker training

Lessons Learned

- Wear appropriate snake-bite PPE (e.g., gaiters, chaps, or other puncture-resistant protection) where rattlesnake encounters are possible.
- Shut off the ATV and remove your helmet before dismounting in rattlesnake habitat to improve awareness of warning signs.
- Visually inspect work areas and maintain awareness when dismounting equipment or working around vegetation, rocks, gates, and other potential snake habitat.
- Identify the nearest medical facility with antivenom when planning work in rattlesnake habitat.
- Ensure procedures address biological hazards (e.g., rattlesnakes, venomous spiders).
- Verify worker training covers hazard identification, controls, and precautions for rattlesnake habitat.



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Learning Together

Energy Safety Canada (ESC) facilitates the sharing of safety knowledge to support industry-wide learning and continuous improvement. By making lessons learned and leading practices accessible, ESC helps organizations of all sizes learn from one another and strengthen safe work performance.

This resource is intended to support learning and informed decision-making. Every organization is responsible for determining how the information applies to its own operations. For the full legal disclaimer, visit energysafetycanada.com/legal.

Share a Priority Learning Moment

Every lesson shared has the potential to prevent an incident. If your organization has a Priority Learning Moment, [we'd like to hear from you](#).