



Reptile Risk Management Plan

Procedural step	Hazards	Risks	R1*	Risk controls	R2**
Rescue animal (Snakes, Monitors, Lizards, Turtles & Frogs)	Working out of doors	Exposure to sun.	3	Wear appropriate sun protection including long sleeved shirt, long pants, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.	4
		Exposure to climatic extremes - heat, cold, rain, wind, storms.	3	Check weather forecast for possible sudden changes to weather conditions. Wear clothing appropriate to the weather conditions. Eliminate activity in dangerous weather conditions such as severe thunderstorms; hail storms or extreme bushfire danger.	5
	Working after dark	Becoming lost / disoriented.	3	Rescuers where possible not work alone after dark. Obtain clear directions before proceeding to rescue location. Carry reliable communication device, e.g. mobile phone, UHF radio. Take a map of the area or reliable GPS navigator. In the event of becoming lost or disoriented, cease the activity and regain bearings or call for assistance.	5
		Trip hazards exacerbated.	2	Take a fully charged torch. Wear suitable protective clothing, including long sleeved shirt, long pants and covered footwear with non-slip soles. Notify someone of ETA and upon your return	4



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	Working in rural / remote areas	Lack of reliable communication (e.g. mobile phone coverage).	4	Carry reliable communication device, e.g. mobile phone, UHF radio. Consider taking another member along on remote rescues.	5
		Becoming lost / disoriented.	3	As above.	
	Working alone	Physical overexertion.	2	Eliminate the activity if the rescue will exceed the physical capability of the rescuer.	5
		Potential psychological stress.	3	Carry reliable communication device, e.g. mobile phone, UHF radio. Consider working in pairs, especially where one is inexperienced.	4
	Hazards specific to rescue site, e.g. water bodies, cliffs, steep slopes, dense timber, falling branches, powerlines.	Slips, trips, fall, collisions, drowning.	3	Rescuers to carry out a "Take Five" site risk assessment to determine specific hazards before attempting the rescue. Eliminate the activity or seek assistance if the risk is perceived as too great.	5
	Animal enclosure e.g. Chook house, bird aviary, barn etc. Small entry, low roof.	Physical injury, head injury, slip, trip or fall	3	Rescuers to complete preliminary site risk assessment to determine specific hazards before attempting the rescue. Eliminate the activity or seek assistance if the risk is perceived as too great. Must carry torch for any indoor or poorly illuminated area. Carry first aid bandage.	4 5 5



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	<p>Hazards specific to Indoor rescue site, e.g. business / industrial premises, house, garage or garden shed etc. Manual moving furniture and or other items</p>	<p>Strains, sprains, manual handling injuries, bite or scratches.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Rescuers to complete preliminary site risk assessment to determine specific hazards before attempting the rescue. Eliminate the activity or seek assistance if the risk is perceived as too great. Must carry torch for any indoor or poorly illuminated area. Carry first aid bandage.</p>	<p>4 5 5</p>
	<p>Bites, scratches from rescued animal</p>	<p>Loss of fingers Cuts, bruises, abrasions, eye injury. Disease transmission.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Rescuers to be trained in appropriate capture and handling techniques. Wear appropriate protective clothing including long sleeved shirt, long pants, covered footwear, and eye protection. Maintain a quiet environment at the rescue site to minimise the risk of the animal panicking. Ensure tetanus vaccination is up to date. Wear appropriate protective clothing, as above. First aid when necessary. Carry first aid bandage.</p>	<p>5 5 5</p>
	<p>Motor vehicle, interior, chassis, engine compartment. Confined space.</p>	<p>Exposure to heat, bite.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Rescuers to complete preliminary site risk assessment to determine specific hazards before attempting the rescue. Eliminate the activity or seek assistance if the risk is perceived as too great. Must carry torch for any indoor or poorly illuminated area. Carry first aid bandage.</p>	<p>4 5</p>



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	Entanglement, hot weather, steep slopes, long grass, dense vegetation or confined space – wire or poly netting, stressed snake	Bite or scratches Presence of venom Death, Serious injury, illness.	2	Bites on clothing or equipment can leave venom as residue. Always assume any bite from a venomous animal has deposited venom. Clothing must be removed immediately. Clothing or equipment must be isolated until it can be machine washed with hot water. Venom deposited on skin must be washed off immediately under running water Carry first aid bandage	4
	Bite from venomous reptile	Death, Serious injury, illness	2	Use appropriate PPE when handling snakes; at a minimum this must be long pants, covered footwear, no loose jewellery (for example, bangles) Carry at least one NEW, unused pressure bandage Achieve competency in handling reptiles and appropriate first aid Carry first aid bandage.	4
	Other contact with venom	Serious injury, death	3	Bites on clothing or equipment can leave venom as residue. Always assume any bite from a venomous animal has deposited venom. Clothing must be removed immediately. Clothing or equipment must be isolated until it can be machine washed with hot water. Venom deposited on skin must be washed off immediately under running water Carry first aid bandage.	4



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Transport animal	Animal not appropriately restrained in vehicle	Injury to driver &/or passengers. Motor vehicle accident.	3	Animal is to be securely restrained in a container suitable to the species and age and size of the animal. Snakes must be in a purpose made snake bag that has been tied off correctly, and the bag inside a secure container. Both bag and container must be labelled as containing a live snake Monitors must be transported in canvas bags or in a secure plastic or wooden container with ventilation and labelled	5
Rehabilitate animal	Zoonotic diseases	Illness	3	See zoonotic diseases in the Intro to WHS segment – under the WHS tab. Maintain hygiene appropriate to the species Provide washing / hygiene facilities for animal housing and feeding utensils separate from those used by the household.	4
	Manual handling of animal (e.g. for administration of fluids / medication or weighing)	Strains, sprains, manual handling injuries	3	Refer to RICC and species manuals.	4
	Administration of rehydration fluids or medications	Needle stick injury. Poisoning.	2	Refer to WHS section of RICC manual and information under the WHS tab. Members must demonstrate competence prior to carrying out this procedure.	4
	Storage of animal medications	Poisoning	2	Animal medications must be kept in a secure storage area out of the reach of children.	4



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	Preparation of animal foodstuffs	Potential contamination of food preparation areas.	3	Animal food preparation areas must be separate from household food preparation areas.	5
	Feeding animal	Potential for animal to bite or scratch	3	Carers must exercise caution when opening and close enclosures. Proper feeding tongs must be used when feeding snakes	5
	Maintain hygiene	Allergic reactions to hygiene products, potentially leading to anaphylaxis (e.g. disinfectants, latex gloves).	2	Carers must read product labels and safety data sheets for any products used. Label directions regarding usage, rates of application and safety precautions must be strictly adhered to.	3
		Disease transmission from collection of animal waste / dead body / uneaten food	3	Wear appropriate PPE, e.g. impervious gloves. Dispose of collected faeces in a suitable area, away from possible contact by children, household pets or human food sources (e.g. vegetable garden).	4
	Contact with animal body fluids, e.g. blood, urine, faeces, saliva	Disease transmission	2	Use appropriate PPE, which could include impervious gloves and disposable overalls. Carry a means of washing / disinfecting contaminated skin, e.g. a container of water for hand washing or waterless hand cleaner.	4



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	Maintain care facilities	Potential for injury from escaped animal Potential for injury to members of the public	3	Enclosures to be regularly maintained and any deficiencies repaired immediately. Furnishing within enclosures must be placed so as to allow clear pathways for movement. All snakes and monitors should wherever possible be kept in a locked escape proof room. Unauthorised persons must not have access to these animals or enclosures. All snake and monitor enclosures must be labelled with details of the animal	5
	Use of electrical equipment, e.g. heat pads, heat boxes	Potential ignition source. Potential for electrocution.	2	Consider requirements to “test tag” electrical equipment used for animal rehabilitation. Electrical cabling in close proximity to animals (e.g. electrical leads for heat pads) must be located so as to prevent animals from tangling in them or chewing on them.	3
Release animal	Capture animal for release	Manual handling injury. Bites and scratches.	3 3	Consider having another person assisting with capture. Observe handling instructions from RICC and Species manuals	5 5
	Transport animal to release site	Injury to driver or passengers from inappropriately restrained animal	2	Animal must be securely restrained in a container suitable to the size/species of the animal.	4



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	Release animal	Injury to a person at or near the release site from animals	3	Suitable release sites are to be considered from human habitation, including picnic and camping areas. Release animal as per diurnal or nocturnal activity.	5
	Emotional trauma	Psychological stress from death of injured animals in prolonged care.	3	Refer to the interpersonal issues section under the WHS tab.	4
	Human aggression from members of the public at the rescue site	Psychological stress to rescuer.	4	See conflict management interpersonal Issues - under WHS tab.	5
		Potential for physical aggression.	4		5
Training Courses Snakes	Working with live venomous snakes. Capture and Release of venomous snakes. Bite from venomous snake. Other contact with venom	Death. Serious injury, illness	2	Eliminate the activity if the rescue will exceed the physical capability of the rescuer (participant/refresher)	4
			2	Use appropriate PPE when handling snakes; suitable long pants, appropriate covered footwear, no loose jewellery, carry one new pressure bandage at all times.	4
			2	Bites on clothing or equipment can leave venom as residue. Always assume any bite from a venomous animal has deposited venom. Clothing must be removed immediately. Clothing or equipment must be isolated until it can be machine washed with hot water.	4



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				<p>Venom deposited on skin must be washed off immediately under running water.</p> <p>Participants/refreshers supervised at all times by two qualified trainers. First aid treatment and holder of current first aid certificate.</p> <p>All snakes for training kept secured in bags and supervised by allocated trainer at all times.</p> <p>No unauthorised access to snakes.</p>	
Training Courses Snakes		Exposure to climatic extremes – heat, cold, rain, wind, storms	3	<p>Eliminate activity in dangerous weather conditions such as thunderstorms; hail storms or extreme bushfire danger.</p> <p>Check weather forecast for possible sudden changes to weather conditions.</p>	5

* R1 = risk before risk controls are implemented

** R2 Residual risk after risk controls are implemented



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Risk Matrix

1. How severely could it hurt someone OR How ill could it make them?	2. How likely is it to be that bad?			
	Very Likely Could happen at any time	Likely Could happen sometime	Unlikely Could happen but very rarely	Very Unlikely Could happen but probably never will
!!!! Kill or cause permanent disability or ill health	1	1	2	3
!!! Long term illness or serious injury	1	2	3	4
!! Medical attention and several days off work	2	3	4	5
! First aid needed	3	4	5	6

Hazards with a risk rating of **1 or 2** are considered – **High Priority** – Controls that are higher up the hierarchy should be considered

Hazards with a risk rating of **3 or 4** are considered – **Medium priority** – Controls that are at the top to the middle of the hierarchy should be considered

Hazards with a risk rating of **5 or 6** are considered – **Low priority** – PPE or administrative controls options should be considered



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Infectious Diseases

Salmonella

All reptiles can infect humans with salmonella. This is because salmonella is part of the normal flora in their intestinal tract, and it is always being shed in their faeces.

If you handle a reptile, clean its enclosure or handle any accessories that have been in contact with the reptile, you are getting salmonella on your hands. Strict hygiene practises must be observed as to not expose yourself to salmonella when you touch things, such as food, that are going into your mouth.

Salmonella is generally fairly treatable, but it can be a very serious infection for the elderly, for infants, and for people with compromised immune systems.

To ensure that you aren't exposing yourself or your family to salmonella follow these simple procedure every time you handle your reptiles.

- Wash your hands thoroughly with hot, soapy water before and immediately after handling a reptile or anything in its enclosure.
- Disinfect any surfaces that your reptile has come into contact with e.g. examination table
- Keep a waterless antibacterial hand sanitiser readily available when handling a reptile where there are no hand washing facilities available.
- Keep reptile enclosures, bedding material, food and water containers clean.
- Use disposable gloves when cleaning enclosures.
- Do not touch any food or cooking utensils after handling a reptile until you have thoroughly washed your hands.