

Snakes

What to do when you see one. Most snakes are shy and only want to get away.

1

Step back

3 m at least. 10 m if it is venomous or you can't name it.

2

Keep children and pets away

Dogs on a short lead.

3

Keep watch from a distance

Note where it goes. Leave it a way out.

4

Call or WhatsApp ESC

In common areas, tell the guardhouse.

Snake inside your home?

Get everyone out of the room, close the door, push a towel along the gap at the bottom, then call ESC.

Never hit, hose, corner, catch or kill a snake.

Bitten? Call 995.

CALL OR WHATSAPP

+65 9149 1408

70+ different snakes live in Singapore. Most are shy and harmless to people; only a handful are dangerously venomous.



Illustration: Brahminy blind snake, as small as an earthworm



Illustration: reticulated python, several metres long

Why do they come into the estate?

Food

Rats, frogs, geckos and birds. Where food waste draws rats, snakes follow.

Drains and canals

They travel along drains and canals, and these run right through our estates.

Shelter

Dense planting, clutter, pipes and gaps give them a cool, hidden place to rest.

Heavy rain

Flooded burrows and drains push snakes to look for somewhere dry.

They do a job for us

Snakes eat rats and other pests. Giving them space, and taking away the food that draws them in, is safer for everyone than trying to get rid of them yourself.

How dangerous is it?

Every animal in our Wildlife Series gets a Space level: how dangerous it is, and how far back to stay. These are the snakes you are most likely to meet. All photos are illustrations.

Space 4

Venomous.
Clear the area,
10 m or more.
Call now.



Equatorial spitting cobra



King cobra



Banded krait



Wagler's pit viper

Space 2

Not venomous,
or only mildly.
Give it 3 m.



Reticulated python



Common wolf snake



Paradise tree snake



Oriental whip snake



Striped kukri snake



Painted bronzeback

Space 1

Harmless. Leave
it be.



Brahminy blind snake

Often found in flowerpot soil and mistaken for an earthworm.

Can't name the snake? Treat it as Space 4.

Many snakes look alike, and young snakes can look different from adults. If you are not sure, clear the area and call.

Seen a snake? Here's what to do

Outdoors: carpark, garden, pool deck or drain

- 1 Stop and step back.** 3 m at least, 10 m if it is venomous or you can't name it.
- 2 Keep children and pets back.** Put dogs on a short lead.
- 3 One person keeps watch** from a safe distance and notes where it goes.
- 4 Call or WhatsApp ESC.** In common areas, tell the guardhouse too.

Inside your home

- 1 Get everyone out of the room,** pets too. Don't try to chase it out.
- 2 On the way out, open a window** or outside door only if it is well away from the snake.
- 3 Close the room door** and push a towel along the gap at the bottom.
- 4 Call or WhatsApp ESC,** and keep an eye on the closed door from outside the room.

3 m about three big steps

10 m about two car lengths

Never

- ✗ Hit it, hose it, throw things at it or try to catch or kill it**
- ✗ Corner it or block its way out**
- ✗ Go close for a photo or video**

Snakes come for food and shelter. Take those away and they move on.

In your home

- ✓ Bag and bin food waste every day, and keep pet food indoors and covered
- ✓ Fit a door sweep to the main door and service-yard door, and seal gaps around pipes
- ✓ Keep floor traps covered and drain covers in place
- ✓ Fit mesh on windows on low floors and in ground-floor units
- ✓ Clear clutter and stacked pots on balconies and patios
- ✓ Keep small pets and bird cages snake-proof, or bring them indoors at night

Around the estate (ask your management)

- ✓ Keep bin centres clean and their doors shut, so food waste does not draw rats
- ✓ Repair gaps in fences and drain covers next to homes
- ✓ Keep grass short and fill holes and burrows near ground-floor units
- ✓ Cut back plants that touch walls, windows and balconies

Seen snakes more than once?

Tell your management. Repeat visits usually mean food, such as rats or an open bin centre, is close by.

Venomous: clear the area



SPACE 4

Equatorial spitting cobra

Naja sumatrana · also called black spitting cobra

Venom Highly venomous; can spit venom at the eyes

Size 1 to 1.5 m

Where On the ground: gardens, parks, drains

Eats Rats, frogs, other snakes

Spot it: plain glossy black or dark brown. Rears up, spreads a hood and hisses when threatened.

Good to know: a dog that barks at it can be spat at in the eyes.



SPACE 4

Wagler's pit viper

Tropidolaemus wagleri

Venom Venomous; painful bite, needs a doctor

Size Up to about 1 m

Where In shrubs and trees near forest

Eats Birds, rats, lizards

Spot it: wide triangular head, stout body. Large females are black with yellow bands; males and young are green with small white and red spots.

Good to know: it can sit in the same bush for days, so look before you prune.

Venomous: clear the area



ILLUSTRATION

SPACE 4

Banded krait

Bungarus fasciatus

Venom Highly venomous

Size 1 to 1.8 m

Where On the ground, near water and forest edge

Eats Mostly other snakes

Spot it: bold black and yellow bands that go all the way round the body, a ridge along the back and a blunt tail.

Good to know: out at night. By day it is slow and often hides its head under its coils.



ILLUSTRATION

SPACE 4

King cobra

Ophiophagus bungarus · rare in housing estates

Venom Highly venomous

Size 3 to 4 m, sometimes more

Where Forest and forest edge

Eats Other snakes

Spot it: very long and heavy, olive-brown with pale crossbands, large head with big scales, pale throat.

Good to know: the longest venomous snake in the world.

Non-venomous: give it space



ILLUSTRATION

 SPACE 2

Reticulated python

Malayopython reticulatus

- Venom** None; bites and squeezes if handled
- Size** Often 2 to 4 m, can grow much longer
- Where** Drains, canals, gardens, bin centres
- Eats** Rats, birds; also cats and small dogs

Spot it: thick body with a net pattern of black, gold and grey, and a thin dark line along the top of the head.

Good to know: the longest snake in the world, and a big help with rats.



ILLUSTRATION

 SPACE 2

Common wolf snake

Lycodon capucinus

- Venom** None
- Size** Usually 40 to 60 cm
- Where** In and around homes, often indoors
- Eats** Geckos and skinks

Spot it: slender and brown with fine pale speckles, a pale collar behind a flat head.

Good to know: often found indoors at night, hunting geckos. Bold rings all the way round mean a banded krait instead.

Mildly venomous: give it space



ILLUSTRATION

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ SPACE 2

Paradise tree snake

Chrysopelea paradisi

Venom Mild; not dangerous to people

Size About 1 m

Where Trees, walls and roofs

Eats Lizards and geckos

Spot it: slim and black with green-yellow flecks, often with red-orange spots along the back.

Good to know: it can glide from tree to tree by flattening its body.



ILLUSTRATION

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ SPACE 2

Oriental whip snake

Ahaetulla prasina

Venom Mild; not dangerous to people

Size 1 to 1.5 m, very thin

Where Shrubs, hedges and trees

Eats Lizards and frogs

Spot it: usually bright green, sometimes brown, pencil-thin, with a long pointed snout.

Good to know: its pupils are shaped like a keyhole lying on its side.

Non-venomous and shy



ILLUSTRATION

 **SPACE 2**

Striped kukri snake

Oligodon octolineatus

Venom	None
Size	40 to 60 cm
Where	Gardens and leaf litter
Eats	Lizard eggs, small lizards, frogs

Spot it: brown with thin black stripes along the body and a red-orange stripe down the back.



ILLUSTRATION

 **SPACE 2**

Painted bronzeback

Dendrelaphis pictus

Venom	None
Size	About 1 m, slender
Where	Hedges, shrubs and trees
Eats	Lizards and frogs

Spot it: bronze-brown back with a cream stripe along each side, big eyes, very long tail.


 **SPACE 1**

Brahminy blind snake

Harmless and tiny, often in flowerpot soil and mistaken for an earthworm. Shiny, dark and not ringed like a worm.

If someone is bitten

Call 995 straight away

DO

- ✓ Keep the person still and calm, lying on their side
- ✓ Keep the bitten arm or leg still
- ✓ Take off rings, watches and tight clothing near the bite
- ✓ Note the time and what the snake looked like

DON'T

- ✗ Cut or suck the wound, tie anything around the limb, or use ice
- ✗ Try to catch or kill the snake

Venom in the eyes? Rinse at once with plenty of clean water for at least 15 minutes, holding the eyelids open and without rubbing, while someone calls 995.

Snake myths

MYTH

"Snakes chase people." They don't. A snake coming your way is usually heading for cover, so step aside and let it pass.

MYTH

"A dead snake is safe to touch." A freshly killed snake can still bite by reflex. Don't handle it.

MYTH

"Mothballs or sulphur keep snakes away." They don't work. Removing food and hiding places does.

Save us in your phone

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Step back. Keep watch. Call ESC.

SNAKE AT HOME OR IN THE ESTATE?

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