

WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

HOW TO DEAL WITH A SNAKE NEAR YOUR BALL

1 Observe the color pattern and markings of the snake—from at least six feet away.

All snakes should be considered dangerous. Although there is no universal way to determine whether a snake is venomous from its markings, there are some species that can be identified and should be avoided.

In the United States, watch for:

- Rattlesnakes, which are instantly recognizable by the rattle on the tail.
- Copperheads, which have a distinctive pattern of hourglass-shaped bands down the back.
- Water moccasins, which lack any single feature that allows them to be immediately identified except that they will open their mouths wide when disturbed, exposing the white interior (hence their nickname, “cotton mouth”).
- Coral snakes, which have repeating colored bands of black, yellow, and red—in that order.

Outside the United States, you may encounter:

- Cobras (Asia, Africa, and India), which flare a hood below their heads when disturbed. The hood may not be noticeable if the snake is calm. A cobra will rear up and “stand” when threatened, and

some types may spit venom up to several feet, aiming for the eyes. The venom can cause blindness.

- Kraits (Southeast Asia and India), which may be “common” (black with white bands) or “banded” (alternate black and yellow bands). Both have hexagonal scales along the ridge of the back, though these may be difficult to see from a distance.
- Tiger snakes (Australia, Tasmania, and surrounding islands), which vary in color, will raise their heads, flatten their necks, and hiss loudly when threatened.

2 If the snake appears to be one of these species, take a drop.

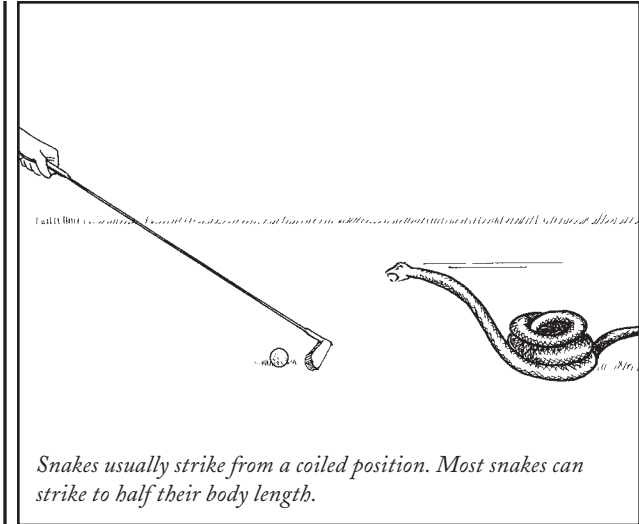
You should sacrifice your ball, but you do not need to sacrifice a stroke penalty: the rules allow a free drop to avoid dangerous animals.

3 If the snake is coiled, this is a sign that it is ready to strike—leave it alone and take a drop.

A coral snake can strike from what appears to be a relaxed posture, however.

4 Stand still.

If the snake does not feel threatened but is intimidated by the sight of you, it may leave the area on its own. Give it time to move away before attempting any ball retrieval measures. Do not try to scare the snake, however, or it is more likely to react defensively.



5 If the snake remains, is not coiled, and does not appear to be venomous, estimate its length before attempting to retrieve your ball.

If the snake is five feet long or shorter, use your club or a telescoping ball retriever to get your ball. A snake of this size should not be able to strike beyond the length of a golf club. Most snakes can strike half their body length. If the snake is longer than five feet, use a tree branch at least four feet long to retrieve your ball.

Be Aware

- Snakes can be encountered at any time of day in the spring or fall. During summer when temperatures rise, snakes are more active in the morning or late afternoon.

- Some nonvenomous snakes imitate the coral snake, but have a band pattern in the following color order: black, yellow, black, red.
- A golf glove will not provide sufficient protection to prevent a snake's fangs from entering your skin.
- Most deaths by snakebite are due to allergic reactions and lack of rapid medical treatment after a bite. Although a snakebite should be considered a medical emergency and treatment should be sought immediately, deaths from snakebites are extremely rare. There are thousands of bites each year in the United States but only a few dozen deaths.

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