

Timber Rattlesnake Best Management Practices for Earth Moving Projects

Projects conducted in the occupied range of the timber rattlesnake have a high risk of encountering this species during construction.

- 1) Workers responsible for implementing this project should be advised that timber rattlesnakes may be encountered and that avoidance is the best means of minimizing risks to personal safety. It is suggested that safety protocols be implemented for timber rattlesnake encounters and workers should be advised that the timber rattlesnake is a state protected species and is not to be harmed. Killing of timber rattlesnakes is prohibited by the Commission pursuant to 58 Pa. Code Section 79.6.
- 2) We recommend that a timber rattlesnake habitat assessment be conducted in the project area by a qualified timber rattlesnake surveyor in order to assist project planners in avoiding disturbance of critical habitat. A list of qualified surveyors and habitat assessment protocol can be found here.
 - [Link to Qualified Timber Rattlesnake Surveyors](#)
 - [Link to Timber Rattlesnake Habitat Protocol](#)
- 3) If potential den (over-wintering) habitat is located during the habitat assessment, we recommend that the project be modified to avoid direct impacts to this irreplaceable habitat, or a Timber Rattlesnake Presence-Absence Survey of potential den (over-wintering) habitat be conducted in the habitats that are currently slated for direct disturbance to determine the presence or absence of rattlesnake hibernacula in the project area. Survey reports should be sent to PFBC for review and consultation. This information is necessary to allow PFBC to formulate recommendations to avoid adverse impacts to the timber rattlesnake.
 - [Link to Timber Rattlesnake Presence-Absence Survey Protocol](#)
- 4) If potential or occupied gestation habitat is located during the habitat assessment and cannot be avoided by the proposed development, we recommend that this habitat be replaced using our habitat creation guidelines.
 - [Link to PFBC Gestation Habitat Creation Guidelines](#)
- 5) Tree clearing and timbering within potential timber rattlesnake critical habitats (135°-275° aspect, >10% slope) should be conducted from October 16 to April 14 in order to avoid encounters with timber rattlesnakes.
- 6) Monitoring: For the safety of workers and snakes, the Commission recommends that a PFBC permitted timber rattlesnake biologist who has the proper skills to handle this venomous species be on-site prior to and during construction, between April 15 and October 15, to inspect and clear the area (including staging areas and access roads) of timber rattlesnakes and to capture and remove any rattlesnakes that may interfere with work activities.
 - [Link to Monitoring Guidelines](#)
- 7) If concerns arise during construction over high numbers of snake encounters or habitat alteration, please contact the PFBC at 814-359-5237 for consultation with our biologists.