

# Safety

Safety is very important when working on volunteer projects. Always be prepared for emergencies and make sure everyone involved has reviewed safety procedures prior to volunteering. It is best to always work in groups. Remember: *BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY.*

## Personal Protective Equipment

When protective equipment is worn, chances of getting through work without an injury are much greater. Improve your success as a volunteer with the proper protection. Depending on your task, suggested items include:

- High top work boots with non-skid soles
- Long pants
- Bright orange vest (near roads and during hunting seasons)
- Heavy-duty work gloves
- Sunscreen
- Cell phone / emergency telephone numbers
- Hat (for sun protection)
- Long-sleeved shirt
- Safety glasses/hard hat
- Insect repellent
- Water bottle/refreshments
- First Aid Kit

## Horseplay

Horseplay on the job is very dangerous and the person endangered isn't just the one that is horsing around. Other people are involved. Reactions of human beings are not entirely predictable. Their reactions to a joke might range from a laugh to a punch in the nose, depending on what mood they're in. Help protect your security and theirs through "horsesense," not horseplay.

## Slips and Falls

Beware of tripping hazards. Stumps, trash, sticks, piles of leaves and tools left lying on the ground may cause you to fall.

## Working In or Near Water

Use extra caution when working on projects in or near bodies of water.

- Always work in groups or with at least one partner.
- Be mindful of submerged rocks or access ramps which often become slippery.
- Wear life jackets when appropriate (it can't save your life if you're not wearing it).
- Broken glass, sticks and other sharp debris may be present but not visible underwater.
- Wear thick soled water shoes or hip waders.
- If working from canoes or kayaks, keep in mind that they tip easily during reaching.

## Lifting

Lifting incorrectly can result in a variety of injuries. Back strain is very common. Follow proper lifting methods:

- Stand close to the load with feet apart to lift.
- Bend knees, keeping back as straight as possible.
- Get a firm grip on the load and make sure your vision is not blocked.
- Test lift load to be sure you are capable of picking it up without straining. If not, ask for help.
- Lift using leg muscles, not back muscles.

## **Driving**

Ensure your vehicle and trailer meets all Secretary of State requirements. Trailers in Michigan now require permanent license plates. Make sure all blinkers and brakes are working before traveling.

Drive safely and secure your load. There is no hurry when volunteering. Heavy loads may cause your vehicle to handle differently than normal. These loads will also increase braking distances. Loosely loaded objects may shift in turns. Unsecured debris may blow out of the vehicle while driving, so use a tarp. Use flagging if items extend over the truck or trailer bed.

## **Fire Hazard**

Be aware of current fire danger conditions. Always be careful when smoking. Fully extinguish and properly dispose of your cigarettes. Do not dispose of newly extinguished cigarettes in bags or dumpsters full of trash. Also remember that sparks from mufflers and excessive heat from your vehicle's undercarriage could ignite a fire in dry conditions.

## **Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion**

Carry a water supply with you at all times to replenish fluids; especially during hot and humid days.

Heat stroke and heat exhaustion occur from being exposed to high temperatures and from exposure to the sun, especially on calm, humid days. Heat stroke is dangerous--get emergency help FAST!

*Heat stroke symptoms include:*

- Very high temperature with hot, dry skin
- Rapid breathing and pulse; the victim may appear confused
- Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, seizures, and even coma are possible

*First-aid for heat stroke:*

Immediate professional help is important, but until help arrives:

- Move the victim to a cooler area
- Remove excess clothing
- Sprinkle water on the person or fan the body for cooling
- If victim is awake, give them small sips of water

*Heat exhaustion symptoms include:*

- Body temperature is near normal
- Heavy sweating is noticeable
- Other symptoms may include dizziness, weakness, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, rapid heart rate, and blacking out.

*First-aid for heat exhaustion:*

- Relocate to a cooler area
- Victim should lie down and, if conscious, sip water

Never give the victim alcoholic beverages, tea, or coffee. If there is any doubt of a rapid recovery, see a doctor at once.

## **Stinging Insects**

**Seek emergency medical help immediately if the victim has a history of serious reactions to stings or if a serious reaction develops.**

Be aware of surroundings and listen for buzzing. Stay alert, especially when working near bees and wasps. Watch for yellow jacket nests (usually in the ground) and be sure not to bump into a gray paper nest of the tree dwelling bald-faced hornet.

Wear insect repellent for mosquitoes and black flies. If you are allergic to insect stings, be sure to have appropriate first aid material with you. Make sure your coworkers know what to do for you in case of an emergency.

Avoid wearing strong perfumes, particularly floral-scented ones. Wear light-colored clothing as opposed to dark or brightly colored clothes which seem to attract bees and wasps.

If chased by a swarm, escape to a body of water and remain submerged until they leave. If no water is available, place your hands and forearms across your head to protect your eyes, throat and neck. Move away quickly and quietly, as agitated movement and noise can irritate the insects and evoke further attacks.

Do not leave opened cans of sweet drinks standing around. Always check before drinking from an open container, even if it only contains water.

## **Snakes**

There are 18 species of snakes found in Michigan. The only venomous snake is the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake.

*Status:* Special Concern, it is protected by the State of Michigan and is a candidate for federal listing.

*Range:* Entire Lower Peninsula.

*Habitat:* During spring, Massasaugas use open shallow wetlands or shrub swamps. During summer, Massasaugas move to drier upland areas. Look for them “sunning” in open fields, grassy meadows, or farmed sites.

*Behavior:* Massasaugas are sluggish, slow moving snakes. They are generally considered unaggressive; it is unusual for the species to strike unless it is directly disturbed. Although the venom is highly toxic, fatalities are very uncommon because the species’ short fangs can inject only a small volume. Small children and people in poor health are thought to be at greatest risk.

*Description:* Massasaugas have thick bodies with colors that range from gray to brown. Its back has large, dark brown blotches with smaller, lighter brown patches on its sides. Young Massasaugas are similarly marked with brighter coloration. This snake has a wide triangular head and eyes with slit-shaped pupils. Adults can be 18” to 30” in length. Young Massasaugas have small yellow buttons or “rattles” at the tip of their tail. Adult “rattles” are grayish yellow, like pieces of corn kernels, on top of dark rings. Snakes may bite to protect themselves.

*Look-Alike Snakes:* The Eastern milk snake and Eastern hog-nosed snake are harmless. A hog-nose snake will flare its head, coil, and may strike.

### *Rattlesnake Etiquette:*

1. Keep your distance
2. If you hear a rattle or buzzing sound. STOP! Look, but don't move—the snake may be close to you. Slowly move away after the snake has been located. Do not pick it up or kill it.
3. Report all sightings and location of Massasauga rattlesnakes to a DNR wildlife office. Include a photograph if possible.

### *If a snake bite occurs:*

1. Stay calm.
2. Move away from the snake.
3. Try to remember what the snake looked like.
4. Notify someone of your bite; sit down and limit your movements.
5. Go the nearest emergency room/hospital for treatment.
6. If a pet is bitten, immediately notify your veterinarian.

## **Poison Plants**

Poison Ivy, Poison Sumac, and Nettles are very prevalent on public lands. See below for identification:

### *Treatment:*

Wash exposure site thoroughly as soon as possible.  Clean hands and wash well under finger nails.  Apply cool compresses to affected parts.  Wash clothing worn when exposed to the plant.  Calamine lotion or cortisone cream may be used to relieve mild itching.  Contact your physician if the reaction is severe or widespread.

Poison Sumac



Poison Ivy



Nettles



## **Natural Elements**

Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Watch for tree “leaners” or loose limbs that could fall from above. Do not put yourself in an unsafe position.

## **Wildlife**

Hopefully you will be able to see a variety of wildlife while you are volunteering. While these animals appear to be cute and cuddly, their actions are unpredictable. Do not attempt to approach or otherwise disturb any wildlife.

## **Hazardous Materials**

Be particularly careful while around hazardous materials such as paint, oil, antifreeze, grease cutters, drums of liquid, etc. Do not let any of this material touch your skin. Do not inhale any fumes that may be present. Remain upwind.

Use caution when handling items such as broken glass and sharp objects.

Do not attempt to pick up hypodermic needles or medical waste--contact the local health department and tell them the location.

Do not attempt to remove explosive materials such as unexploded ammunition or dynamite--contact the local authorities for removal.

**Methamphetamine labs have been found on public land. Watch for materials listed below. If found, leave in place and report to the Michigan State Police Methamphetamine Investigation Team at 989-732-7588.**

**This is no picnic in the park**



**It's a METH LAB!**



#### **WHAT IS IT?**

Methamphetamine, an illegal drug, also called "meth", "crank", "ice", "chalk", "glass" or "yaba" is:

- highly toxic
- extremely dangerous

#### **WHAT ARE ITS EFFECTS**

The white crystalline powder:

- affects the central nervous system
- alters the brain chemistry
- causes severe damage to internal organs



## WHERE ARE METH LABS FOUND?

Hidden labs are usually set up in:

- secluded areas
- abandoned structures
- automobile trunks
- occupied or abandoned homes
- public lands



## METH LABS CAN CAUSE:

- soil and water contamination
- explosions
- fire
- threats to fish and stream wildlife
- costly Hazardous Materials clean up in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency regulations

## INGREDIENTS

- drain cleaner ■ pseudoephedrine
- ether ■ battery acid ■ acetone
- brake cleaner ■ gasoline additive
- lithium strips ■ anhydrous ammonia

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Meth labs often produce strong odors that smell like ether, ammonia, acetone, or cat urine and large amounts of trash including:

- antifreeze containers ■ chemical-stained coffee filters ■ empty boxes of allergy tablets ■ drain cleaner product cans and containers ■ battery casings ■ lantern fuel cans ■ standard grill propane tanks (often have corrosion of blue coloring around the valve and handles)

## IF YOU FIND A METH LAB

- Use extreme caution and do not disturb site.
- Do not approach or confront any individuals in the area.
- Contact your nearest State Police or local law enforcement with information about the location of the lab site.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov)
- [www.lifeormeth.org](http://www.lifeormeth.org)
- Contact your local law enforcement or Drug Enforcement Office.

**Do not confront people who are breaking public land laws!** Your personal safety is very important to us. If you happen to see a person breaking a law, **DO NOT APPROACH THEM.** If you are able to get a description of the vehicle (type, color, make, approx. year) and/or a license plate number, turn it over to the local authorities (Sheriff, Conservation Officer, or Forest Service Law Enforcement personnel) with an account of what you witnessed.