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## Instruction manual – Venomous Snake Handling Bootcamp

### The Team

All full-time staff and volunteers need to be dressed neatly in ASI-branded clothing, be it shirts or T-shirts. Every team member needs to have a name tag.

### Setup

Staff must arrive at the venue at least one hour before the course commences. Stock needs to be packed out and properly displayed at least half an hour before the course commences.

Unpacking equipment, **especially** snake tongs, once a course has started is disruptive and unprofessional.

### Arrival of delegates

The attendance registers and name tags must be ready at the venue entrance with spare name tags and a marker pen. Please ensure that every arriving delegate is properly greeted, welcomed and asked to sign the attendance register prior to getting coffee or tea.

The greeting must be friendly and professional. Please refrain from turning delegate arrivals into a circus with silly jokes and too much humour. Always keep it professional.

### The Course

Courses should start on the advertised time. The presenter must introduce himself/herself as well as all the additional staff members and volunteers. Explain the sequence of events for the day including tea breaks and light lunch. Always point out where the toilets are.

All delegates need to complete the attendance register and to sign the indemnity form.

### Snake Handling

The handling area must be properly cordoned off with danger tape and our **Danger – Snake Handling** signs must be affixed to the danger tape. Additional ASI branding should also be displayed.

Keep an eye on members of the public and remove them from the snake handling area if they enter it.

### **A group photo must be taken.**

Bootcamp starts with hooking a Puff Adder and placing it into a bucket and later into a tube. Delegates need to do this multiple times.

**Double hooking** – shorten the hooks to support under the forearm. The head third is lifted first and the second hook is slid under the back third to support and lift the snake.

We then move onto snake tongs and delegates now have the choice of using the JM 150 or the JM 100 snake tongs. Buckets and tubes.



**Tree scenarios** – if there are decent trees, a cobra is placed in the tree and using a tong and hook, the snake is gently untangled and lifted out the tree.

### **Tailing**

After tea we teach tailing. As this is their first time, large Snouted/Anchita's/Forest Cobras are ideal. We can do more advanced snakes in the Advanced course. The snake hook must be shortened, the tail section of the snake lifted above the knee and the tail gripped at the cloaca. Too little tail gripped hurts the snake and too much tail may result in the tail section wrapping around the wrist. If delegates bend too low the snake has traction and can spin around and bite.

Delegates must be told never to tail adders and small venomous snakes – anything under 1 m.

Always be patient and gentle with delegates and praise them for good handling.

Delegates do have name tags – mention their names when they are busy handling.

### **Things to avoid:**

Avoid physical contact with delegates. No hands on shoulders or on their hands when showing them how to use the snake handling equipment.

When a delegate is using a snake hook or a snake tong on a snake, refrain from interfering with a snake tong or hook – having two people using snake handling equipment on a snake at the same time is not good and intimidates delegates.

Keep humour to a minimum. Remain professional.

### **Snake Removal Scenarios**

Two or three different scenarios must be set up, depending on the number of delegates. Each delegate needs to complete at least two scenarios. Make sure torches are charged. Try not to interfere with scenario but caution the person if it is looking unsafe.

### **Wrapping up**

Ensure that each delegate received his/her certificate after completion. Remind them of permits for removals and advanced course.