NOODKAS

FREE CARD PACK
KNOW WHAT TO DO.

Twelve one-page action cards for emergencies and six field guides for South African hazards. Print them, laminate them, keep them in the car, the kitchen and your backpack. They work with no signal.

ANY MOBILE, NO AIRTIME	AMBULANCE / FIRE	SAPS POLICE	ER24
112	**10177**	**10111**	**084 124**

POISON INFORMATION
0861 555 777

ACTION CARDS

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FIELD GUIDES

01	Snakes of the Western Cape & Karoo
02	Spiders & scorpions
03	Veld fire
04	Flash floods
05	Extreme heat
06	Poisonous & edible plants

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Free to print and share unchanged. Questions: brendan@thunderbirddesigns.co.za

SNAKEBITE & SCORPION STING

EMERGENCY	ER24	POISON INFO
112	084 124	0861 555 777

1 GET AWAY FROM THE SNAKE

Move at least 5 metres away. Don't try to catch or kill it.

2 CALL FOR HELP AND HEAD FOR HOSPITAL

Antivenom is only given in hospital. Say it's a snakebite and where you are.

3 KEEP THEM CALM, STILL AND LYING DOWN

Splint the bitten limb so it can't move. Carry them; don't let them walk.

4 TAKE OFF RINGS, WATCHES, TIGHT CLOTHING

Swelling can start fast, especially with adder bites.

5 NOTE THE TIME AND WATCH THEIR BREATHING

Photo of the snake only if it's safe. Drooping eyelids, slurred speech or trouble swallowing or breathing means it's getting worse: be ready for rescue breaths.

DO NOT

- Cut or suck the wound
- Use a tourniquet
- Use ice, electric shock or alcohol
- Give aspirin or ibuprofen (paracetamol is fine)

VENOM IN THE EYES?

Spitting cobra or rinkhals. Rinse with lots of clean water, or milk or any bland drink, for 10–15 minutes. Don't rub. Then hospital.

PRESSURE BANDAGE?

Only if you know it was a mamba or a non-spitting cobra (nerve venom): firm crepe bandage over the whole limb, plus a splint. Never for adder bites.

SCORPION STING

Thick tail, small pincers = more dangerous. Cold pack and paracetamol for pain. Hospital for sweating, drooling, twitching, trouble swallowing, or any child or elderly patient.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on African Snakebite Institute first-aid guidance; SA Poison Information Helpline. Free to print and share unchanged.

BLEEDING & TRAUMA

EMERGENCY	AMBULANCE	ER24
112	10177	084 124

1 MAKE IT SAFE, PROTECT YOUR HANDS

Traffic, machinery, animals first. Gloves or a plastic bag over your hands.

2 CALL 112

Or send someone to call while you work.

3 PRESS HARD ON THE WOUND

Use a cloth or your hand. Press firmly and don't lift to check. If blood soaks through, add more cloth on top.

4 TOURNIQUET FOR LIFE-THREATENING ARM OR LEG BLEEDING

If spurting or pooling blood won't stop with pressure: tie it 5–7 cm above the wound (not on a joint), twist until bleeding stops, write the time on their skin. Don't loosen it.

5 PACK DEEP WOUNDS YOU CAN'T TOURNIQUET

Groin, armpit, neck: stuff cloth deep into the wound and press hard for 10 minutes.

6 TREAT FOR SHOCK

Lie them down, keep them warm, raise the legs if there's no leg or spine injury. Nothing to eat or drink.

DO NOT

- Remove anything stuck in the wound (pad around it)
- Loosen or remove a tourniquet
- Move someone with a head, neck or back injury unless they're in danger
- Put a tourniquet on the neck

HEAD, NECK OR BACK INJURY

Keep the head in line with the body. Talk to them, keep them still, and wait for help unless they're in danger.

BROKEN BONES

Splint as it lies with anything rigid: a stick, a rolled magazine, a board. Pad it and tie above and below the break.

NOSEBLEED

Sit up, lean forward, pinch the soft part of the nose for 10 minutes.

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BURNS & VELD FIRE

EMERGENCY	FIRE / AMBULANCE	ER24
112	10177	084 124

1 STOP THE BURNING

Get them away from the heat. Stop, drop and roll if clothing is alight.

2 COOL THE BURN FOR 20 MINUTES

Cool running water, as soon as possible (still worth it up to 3 hours later). Keep the rest of them warm.

3 TAKE OFF JEWELLERY AND LOOSE CLOTHING

Leave anything that's stuck to the skin.

4 COVER LOOSELY

Cling film laid on, not wrapped, or a clean plastic bag. Nothing fluffy.

5 GET MEDICAL HELP IF...

Bigger than their palm; on the face, hands, feet, groin or a joint; white or charred; chemical or electrical; or a child or elderly person.

DO NOT

- Use ice, butter, oil or toothpaste
- Pop blisters
- Pull off stuck clothing
- Touch someone still connected to electricity

VELD FIRE COMING?

Leave early on a route away from the fire. Never drive into smoke. Wet cloth over the mouth; cotton or wool clothes, not synthetics.

TRAPPED IN A CAR

Park in a clear area away from bush, hazards on, windows and vents closed. Get down below the windows and cover yourself with a woollen blanket until the front passes.

TRAPPED ON FOOT

Move to ground that has already burnt, or bare rock or gravel. Avoid uphill slopes: fire runs uphill.

CHEMICAL BURN

Brush off powder, then rinse with lots of water for at least 20 minutes.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on WHO-ICRC Basic Emergency Care; Working on Fire veld-fire safety advice. Free to print and share unchanged.

HEAT STROKE & DEHYDRATION

EMERGENCY	AMBULANCE	ER24
112	10177	084 124

1 SPOT HEAT STROKE

Confusion, slurred speech, collapse, fits, or hot skin (sweating may stop). That is an emergency: call 112.

2 GET THEM INTO SHADE

Lie them down somewhere cool, out of the sun.

3 COOL THEM FAST

Remove extra clothes. Soak the skin with water and fan hard. Ice or cold packs on the neck, armpits and groin. Cold-water immersion is best if you can.

4 SIPS OF FLUID ONLY IF FULLY ALERT

Cool water or rehydration drink, slowly. Nothing by mouth if they're confused or drowsy.

5 KEEP COOLING UNTIL HELP ARRIVES

Or until they're thinking clearly again. If unconscious but breathing, put them on their side.

DO NOT

- Give drinks to someone confused or unconscious
- Rely on paracetamol or aspirin to bring the temperature down
- Stop cooling too early

HEAT EXHAUSTION (MILDER)

Heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, headache, cramps, nausea. Rest in shade, cool down, sip rehydration drink. If no better in 30 minutes, treat as heat stroke.

HOME REHYDRATION DRINK

1 litre clean water + 6 level teaspoons sugar + ½ level teaspoon salt. Stir until dissolved. (WHO recipe)

PREVENT IT

Work early and late, not 11:00–15:00. Hat and loose clothes. Drink before you're thirsty. Watch children, the elderly and dogs.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on WHO-ICRC Basic Emergency Care; WHO oral rehydration guidance. Free to print and share unchanged.

STRANDED / BREAKDOWN

EMERGENCY	SAPS	ER24
112	10111	084 124

1 GET FULLY OFF THE ROAD

Hazards on. Warning triangle at least 45 m behind the vehicle.

2 GET PEOPLE OUT OF THE TRAFFIC SIDE

Stand well away, behind a barrier if there is one, unless it's unsafe outside.

3 CALL AND GIVE YOUR EXACT LOCATION

112 or your roadside assistance. Use the offline map for coordinates, or the nearest km marker, pass or farm name.

4 STAY WITH THE VEHICLE

It's shade, shelter and much easier to spot than a person. Only walk if help is close, known, and it's cool.

5 SAVE SWEAT, NOT WATER

Rest in the shade, move only in the cool hours, drink when thirsty. Don't drink radiator water.

6 MAKE YOURSELF VISIBLE

Bonnet up, bright cloth on the roof, mirror flashes at vehicles or aircraft. Three of anything (fires, whistles, flashes) means distress.

DO NOT

- Leave the vehicle in the heat of the day
- Stand behind or in front of the car on the road
- Sleep in a running car (exhaust fumes)
- Drive deeper into a pass you don't know with a failing vehicle

BEFORE KAROO PASSES

Tell someone your route and when you'll arrive. Signal is patchy between towns: Tradouw, Swartberg, Gamkaskloof.

QUICK FIXES TO CHECK

Fuel, battery terminals tight and clean, fuses, fan belt, tyre pressures. Bike: chain, plug cap, fuel tap, kill switch.

KIT THAT LIVES IN THE VEHICLE

5 L water per person, tyre plug kit and pump, jumper leads, torch, first-aid kit, warm layer, power bank.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on AA / roadside-safety practice; SAS Survival Handbook. Free to print and share unchanged.

SAFE DRINKING WATER

EMERGENCY	POISON INFO	ER24
112	0861 555 777	084 124

1 PICK THE CLEANEST SOURCE

Tap or tank before borehole; borehole before river or dam. Stay away from water near toilets, dead animals or chemicals.

2 CLEAR IT FIRST

Let cloudy water settle, then pour it through a clean cloth.

3 BOIL: THE SUREST WAY

A rolling boil for 1 minute. Cool it covered, then store it covered.

4 NO POWER? USE BLEACH

Plain, unscented household bleach (e.g. Jik): 1 teaspoon (5 ml) per 25 litres, about 4 drops per litre. Mix and wait at least 2 hours before drinking.

5 STORE IT CLEAN

Clean container with a lid. Pour, don't dip cups or hands in.

DO NOT

- Use scented, thick or 'colour-safe' bleach
- Rely on boiling for chemical or fuel contamination
- Drink from stagnant, green or oily water if there's any other choice

SUN METHOD (SODIS)

Clear plastic bottle, 2 litres or less, filled with clear water. Lay it in full sun for 6 hours, or 2 days if cloudy. (WHO)

TANKS AND BOREHOLES

Divert the first rain off the roof. Treat tank water with bleach as above if you're unsure of it.

SIGNS OF A GUT INFECTION

Diarrhoea, vomiting, fever: start the home rehydration drink early (see the Heat card) and get care for children and the elderly.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on SA Department of Water & Sanitation household guidance; WHO guidance on boiling and SODIS. Free to print and share unchanged.

CPR & CHOKING

EMERGENCY — USE SPEAKER	AMBULANCE	ER24
112	10177	084 124

1 CHECK: SAFE? RESPONDING?

Make sure it's safe. Shout their name and tap their shoulders.

2 CALL 112 ON SPEAKER

Send someone else to call if you can, and to fetch a defibrillator (AED) if there is one nearby.

3 BREATHING NORMALLY?

Tilt the head back, lift the chin and look for up to 10 seconds. No breathing, or only gasps, means start CPR.

4 PUSH HARD AND FAST

Heel of your hand in the centre of the chest, other hand on top, arms straight. Push 5–6 cm deep, 100–120 a minute (the beat of 'Stayin' Alive'). Let the chest rise fully.

5 ADD BREATHS IF YOU'RE TRAINED

30 pushes, then 2 breaths. If not trained or not willing, keep doing pushes only. That still saves lives.

6 DON'T STOP

Keep going until help takes over, an AED tells you to stop, or they start breathing normally. Swap rescuers every 2 minutes.

DO NOT

- Stop CPR to keep checking for a pulse
- Do blind finger sweeps in the mouth
- Give abdominal thrusts to a baby
- Leave a choking person alone

CHOKING ADULT OR CHILD

Can they cough? Let them cough. Can't speak, breathe or cough: 5 firm back blows between the shoulder blades, then 5 abdominal thrusts (fist above the navel, pull in and up). Repeat. If they go limp, start CPR.

CHOKING BABY (UNDER 1)

Face down along your forearm, head low: 5 back blows. Then face up: 5 chest thrusts with two fingers. Repeat. No abdominal thrusts.

CPR ON CHILDREN AND BABIES

Children: one or two hands, about a third of the chest depth (around 5 cm). Babies: two fingers, about 4 cm.

BREATHING BUT UNRESPONSIVE

Put them on their side (recovery position) and keep checking their breathing.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on Resuscitation Council of Southern Africa / ERC basic life support guidance. Free to print and share unchanged.

FRACTURES & SPRAINS

EMERGENCY	AMBULANCE	ER24
112	10177	084 124

1 CHECK FOR BIGGER PROBLEMS FIRST

Breathing, heavy bleeding, head injury. A fall from height or off a bike means you should assume a neck or back injury.

2 KEEP IT STILL AS YOU FOUND IT

Don't try to straighten a bent or deformed limb. Support it where it lies.

3 SPLINT IT

Pad it, then tie something rigid along it that reaches past the joint above and the joint below. Use a sling for the arm, or strap leg to leg.

4 BONE THROUGH THE SKIN?

Cover the wound with a clean dressing and press around it, not on the bone. Don't push the bone back in.

5 CHECK THE HAND OR FOOT BEYOND

After splinting, check colour, warmth and feeling. If it goes pale, cold or numb, loosen the ties.

6 GET THEM TO CARE

Nothing to eat or drink if a bone may need setting. Keep them warm, and watch for shock.

DO NOT

- Straighten a deformed limb
- Take off a motorcycle helmet unless they're vomiting or can't breathe
- Let them walk on a possible leg fracture
- Put ice straight onto skin

SPRAIN OR BROKEN?

A bone may be broken if there's deformity, a grating feeling, they can't bear weight for 4 steps, or the pain is right over the bone. When in doubt, splint it and get it X-rayed.

SPRAINS: RICE

Rest. Ice wrapped in cloth for 20 minutes every 2–3 hours. Compression bandage, firm but not tight. Elevate above the heart.

BIKE CRASH

Keep the head still in line with the body. Two people roll them only if you must clear the airway.

IMPROVISED SPLINTS

Rolled newspaper or magazine, sticks, a sleeping mat, a tent pole. Tape a broken finger or toe to its neighbour.

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ALLERGIC REACTION & ANAPHYLAXIS

SAY "ANAPHYLAXIS"	AMBULANCE	POISON INFO
112	10177	0861 555 777

1 SPOT IT FAST

Swollen lips, tongue or throat; hoarse voice; wheeze or struggling to breathe; dizziness or collapse; often with hives all over. Minutes after a sting, food or medicine.

2 CALL 112 AND SAY "ANAPHYLAXIS"

It's an emergency even if they start to feel better.

3 USE THEIR ADRENALINE PEN NOW

Outer thigh, straight through clothing. Hold it in place for the time printed on the pen. Note the time.

4 POSITION THEM

Struggling to breathe: sit them up. Faint or dizzy: lie them flat with legs raised. Don't let them stand or walk.

5 SECOND PEN AFTER 5 MINUTES

If they're no better and a second pen is available, use it in the other thigh.

6 NOT BREATHING?

Start CPR (card 07).

DO NOT

- Wait to see if it gets better
- Let them stand up or walk about
- Rely on antihistamine tablets for a severe reaction
- Squeeze a bee sting with tweezers

BEE STING

Scrape the sting out sideways with a fingernail or bank card, quickly. Cold pack on the spot.

MANY STINGS

Dozens of bee stings can be dangerous even without an allergy. Get to hospital. Move away from the swarm and get indoors or into a vehicle.

MILD REACTION

Local swelling or itch only: cold pack, antihistamine as the pack directs, and watch them for 30 minutes for any of the warning signs.

IF SOMEONE IN THE FAMILY IS ALLERGIC

They carry two pens at all times. Everyone knows where the pens are and how to use them.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on WHO-ICRC Basic Emergency Care; Allergy Foundation of South Africa guidance. Free to print and share unchanged.

LOAD-SHEDDING & GRID FAILURE

EMERGENCY	FIRE / AMBULANCE	POISON INFO
112	10177	0861 555 777

1 KEEP THE FRIDGE AND FREEZER SHUT

A full freezer stays frozen about 48 hours, half-full about 24. A closed fridge keeps food cold about 4 hours.

2 THROW OUT FOOD THAT'S BEEN WARM TOO LONG

Meat, fish, dairy, cooked food and leftovers kept above 5 °C for more than 2 hours. Never taste to test.

3 RUN GENERATORS OUTSIDE ONLY

At least 6 m from doors and windows, never in a garage or on a covered stoep. Refuel only once it's cool.

4 NEVER BRAAI OR USE GAS HEATERS INDOORS

Charcoal, braais and unvented gas heaters make carbon monoxide, which you can't see or smell. Cook on gas only with a window open.

5 LIGHT SAFELY

Torches and battery lamps before candles. Never leave a candle burning near curtains, children or pets.

6 SAVE WATER AND PHONE POWER

Municipal pumps can stop. Fill containers early. Charge power banks whenever the power is on.

DO NOT

- Plug a generator into a wall socket (it back-feeds and can kill line workers)
- Refreeze food that has fully thawed and warmed up
- Sleep in a room with a running gas heater
- Overload extension leads from an inverter

CARBON MONOXIDE WARNING SIGNS

Headache, dizziness, nausea, drowsiness. Several people or pets ill at once is a strong sign. Get everyone into fresh air and call 112.

SMELL GAS?

No switches, flames or phones in the room. Open windows, close the cylinder valve and get out.

THAWED FOOD YOU CAN SAVE

Food that still has ice crystals or is at 5 °C or below can go back in the freezer.

INVERTERS AND BATTERIES

Keep batteries ventilated and away from heat. Use an electrician-fitted changeover switch for anything wired into the house.

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SHELTER IN PLACE / EVACUATE

EMERGENCY	SAPS	FIRE / AMBULANCE
112	10111	10177

1 GET INFORMATION FIRST

Battery radio, car radio, or official SMS and WhatsApp alerts. Follow instructions from officials, not rumours.

2 SHELTER IN PLACE FOR...

Chemical spills, smoke, unrest outside, radiation or severe storms. Get everyone and the pets inside.

3 SEAL UP

Close and lock doors and windows. Switch off aircon and extractor fans. For chemicals or fallout, seal gaps with wet towels and tape.

4 CHOOSE AN INSIDE ROOM

The one with the fewest windows and outside walls. Take water, radio, torch, phone charger and the first-aid kit.

5 EVACUATE FOR...

Fire, flood, a damaged building, or when officials say so. Go early. Switch off the gas and the mains if there's time.

6 STAY PUT UNTIL THE ALL-CLEAR

Re-entering too soon is how people get caught out.

DO NOT

- Go outside to look
- Drive through smoke or flood water (even a little moving water can wash a vehicle away)
- Use lifts in a fire
- Spread unconfirmed news

RADIATION OR FALLOUT

Get inside a solid building, as deep inside as possible. Stay in, and tune in. Shower and change clothes if you were outside.

FAMILY PLAN

Two meeting points: one near home, one out of town. One contact person outside the area that everyone messages. SMS uses less signal than calls.

GRAB BAG (ONE PER PERSON)

Water, ID copies, cash, meds, phone and power bank, torch, warm layer, snacks, copies of this card. Keep it by the door.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on SA National Disaster Management Centre; WHO/IAEA “get in, stay in, tune in” guidance. Free to print and share unchanged.

SIGNALLING FOR HELP

ANY NETWORK, NO AIRTIME	SAPS	ER24
112	10111	084 124

1 TRY THE PHONE FIRST

Call 112. If calls fail, send an SMS (it often gets through), and climb to higher ground for signal. Send your coordinates from the offline map.

2 MAKE YOURSELF EASY TO SEE

Move into open ground. Lay out bright clothing, foil or a tarp. Stay with the vehicle; it's bigger than you.

3 THREE OF ANYTHING = HELP

3 fires in a triangle, 3 whistle blasts, 3 torch flashes, 3 shouts. Repeat, then pause a minute.

4 SMOKE BY DAY, FIRE BY NIGHT

Have a fire ready to light. Add green leaves or a piece of rubber for thick smoke when you hear a vehicle or aircraft.

5 FLASH A MIRROR

Any shiny surface: a phone screen, a CD, a car mirror. Aim through a V of your fingers at a vehicle or aircraft and sweep it.

6 WRITE ON THE GROUND

Big letters, at least 3 m long, in contrasting material: SOS; V = need help; X = need medical help; an arrow = the way we went.

DO NOT

- Leave a site without a note and an arrow showing your direction
- Burn through your flares or battery when no one's in sight
- Light signal fires in dry, windy veld without a firebreak

TO AN AIRCRAFT

Both arms raised in a Y = YES, need help. One arm up and one down = NO, all fine. Wave a bright cloth.

MAKE THE PHONE LAST

Airplane mode between checks, low-power mode on, screen dimmed. Send a short SMS with your location every few hours.

SOS IN MORSE

••• — — — ••• with a torch, mirror or whistle: three short, three long, three short.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on SAS Survival Handbook rescue chapter; ICAO ground-to-air signal code. Free to print and share unchanged.

SNAKES OF THE WESTERN CAPE & KAROO

EMERGENCY	ER24	POISON INFO
112	084 124	0861 555 777

1 WATCH WHERE YOU STEP AND REACH

Use a torch at night, wear closed shoes and long trousers in the veld, and look before you reach into woodpiles, rock piles or long grass.

2 FREEZE, THEN BACK AWAY

Most bites happen when people try to catch or kill a snake. Give it space and it will move off. Keep children and dogs back.

3 PUFF ADDER: THE ONE PEOPLE STEP ON

Thick body, broad flat head, pale chevrons along the back. It lies still instead of fleeing, often on paths. The bite causes severe pain and swelling.

4 CAPE COBRA: HOOD UP MEANS BACK OFF

Slender, yellow to brown or speckled; spreads a narrow hood when threatened. Its venom affects the nerves and breathing. Bites are life-threatening.

5 RINKHALS: SPITS AT THE EYES

Dark, with pale bands across the throat. Rears up and spits venom at the face, and may play dead. Protect your eyes.

6 BOOMSLANG AND BERG ADDER

Boomslang: big eyes, lives in trees, very shy; its venom stops blood clotting and signs can take hours. Berg adder: small adder of mountains and the coast; bites cause drooping eyelids, double vision and loss of taste and smell. There's no antivenom, so get to hospital.

DO NOT

- Try to catch or kill a snake
- Pick up a 'dead' snake (rinkhals play dead)
- Wait to see if a bite was venomous: go to hospital
- Walk barefoot or in sandals in the veld at night

BITTEN?

Use the Snakebite card: keep them still, splint the limb, call 112 and get to hospital. Antivenom is only given in hospital.

HARMLESS LOOKALIKES

Mole snakes, house snakes and slug-eaters are harmless and keep rodents down. If you're not sure, treat it as dangerous and leave it alone.

SNAKE REMOVERS

Many towns have volunteer snake removers. Save a local number in your phone before you need it.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on African Snakebite Institute field guidance; SA Poison Information Helpline. Free to print and share unchanged.

SPIDERS & SCORPIONS

POISON INFO	EMERGENCY	ER24
0861 555 777	**112**	**084 124**

1 SHAKE OUT SHOES, CLOTHES AND BEDDING

Especially anything left on the floor or outside. Wear gloves for woodpiles, bricks and rubble.

2 SCORPIONS: LOOK AT THE TAIL

Thick tail and small pincers means dangerous. Thin tail and big pincers means painful, but rarely dangerous.

3 BLACK BUTTON SPIDERS: GET TO HOSPITAL

Round, glossy black body. The bite can cause severe cramps, sweating and pain spreading from the bite within an hour. Antivenom exists.

4 VIOLIN AND SAC SPIDERS

Small, pale, fast hunters. The bite may not hurt at first, then becomes a sore that slowly turns into an ulcer over days. See a doctor about any wound that keeps getting worse.

5 MOST BIG SPIDERS ARE HARMLESS

Rain spiders and baboon spiders look frightening, but their bites are painful at worst. Leave them be.

DO NOT

- Put bare hands into holes, under rocks or into woodpiles
- Cut or suck a bite or sting
- Use a tourniquet
- Ignore cramps, drooling or trouble breathing after a bite or sting

FIRST AID

Cold pack and paracetamol for pain; keep them calm. Hospital for any child or older person, or anyone with sweating, drooling, twitching, cramps, or trouble swallowing or breathing.

AT NIGHT

An ultraviolet torch makes scorpions glow green-blue, so they're easy to spot around camp and the house.

NOT SURE?

Call Poison info on 0861 555 777 for advice on bites and stings, 24 hours a day.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on African Snakebite Institute guidance on spiders and scorpions; SA Poison Information Helpline. Free to print and share unchanged.

VELD FIRE

EMERGENCY	FIRE / AMBULANCE	SAPS
112	10177	10111

1 PREPARE BEFORE FIRE SEASON

The Western Cape burns in summer; summer-rainfall areas burn in winter and spring. Keep a firebreak at least 10 m wide between the house and the veld, with vegetation cut low or removed, and no firewood against walls. Clean gutters; keep hoses and buckets ready.

2 PACK AND PLAN EARLY

A grab-bag with water, documents, medicines, a phone charger and a torch. Know two ways out and where you will go.

3 LEAVE EARLY

If a fire is heading your way, go while the roads are clear. Leaving late, through smoke, is the most dangerous choice.

4 REPORT IT

Call 112 or your local fire service. Give the location, how big it is and which way the smoke is moving.

5 CAUGHT OUT?

Get onto ground that has already burnt, bare rock, a ploughed field or water. Cover skin with cotton or wool, breathe through a wet cloth and stay low.

DO NOT

- Drive into smoke you can't see through
- Try to outrun a fire uphill: fire runs uphill fast
- Shelter in a water tank or on a roof
- Burn rubbish or make fires on hot, windy days

TRAPPED IN A CAR

Park on a clear patch away from bush, windows and vents closed. Get down below the windows under a woollen blanket until the front passes, then move onto burnt ground.

FARMS AND SMALLHOLDINGS

Join your local Fire Protection Association for firebreak advice, training and help during fires.

AFTER THE FIRE

Watch for hot spots, falling trees and damaged power lines. Check on neighbours and animals.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on Working on Fire and Fire Protection Association public guidance. Free to print and share unchanged.

FLASH FLOODS

EMERGENCY	FIRE / AMBULANCE	SAPS
112	10177	10111

1 WATCH THE WARNINGS

The SA Weather Service issues colour-coded warnings (yellow, orange, red). Rain upstream can flood a dry river where you are, even under a clear sky.

2 NEVER CROSS FLOWING WATER

15 cm of fast water can knock you over. 30 cm can float a car. 60 cm can sweep away a bakkie.

3 GET TO HIGH GROUND

If water is rising, move up and away from rivers, drifts and low bridges. Don't wait to be told.

4 CAR IN RISING WATER?

Unbuckle, open the window and get out onto the roof, then call 112. Don't stay inside a car that is filling with water.

5 STAY OUT OF FLOOD WATER

It hides open manholes and debris, and is often full of sewage. Wash with clean water if you touch it.

DO NOT

- Drive through a flooded drift or low-water bridge
- Camp or park in a dry riverbed
- Walk along riverbanks during a flood
- Touch power lines or wet electrical equipment

KAROO AND DRY AREAS

Dry riverbeds and drifts can flood within minutes of a storm in the mountains. Camp well above the riverbed.

AT HOME

Move documents, medicines and valuables up high. If water may reach the plugs, switch off the mains, but only if you can do it safely.

AFTER THE FLOOD

Boil or treat drinking water (see the Water card) and check walls and roofs before going back inside.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on SA Weather Service impact-based warnings; National Disaster Management Centre public guidance. Free to print and share unchanged.

EXTREME HEAT

EMERGENCY	AMBULANCE	ER24
112	10177	084 124

1 PLAN THE DAY AROUND IT

Do hard work early and late. Stay out of the sun from 11:00 to 15:00 on heatwave days.

2 DRINK BEFORE YOU'RE THIRSTY

Water through the day, more when you sweat. Pale urine is a good sign. Add rehydration drink after heavy sweating.

3 KEEP THE HOUSE COOL WITHOUT POWER

During load-shedding: close curtains on the sunny side by day, open windows at night, and hang wet cloths where air moves.

4 NEVER LEAVE ANYONE IN A PARKED CAR

A closed car heats up fast, even with a window slightly open. Children and pets die in hot cars.

5 CHECK ON PEOPLE AT RISK

Babies and young children, older people, anyone ill and outdoor workers. Look in on neighbours who live alone.

DO NOT

- Leave a child or pet in a car, even for a few minutes
- Drink alcohol to cool down
- Exercise in the hottest hours
- Walk dogs on hot tar (test it with the back of your hand)

WARNING SIGNS

Heavy sweating, cramps, dizziness or headache means heat exhaustion. Confusion or collapse means heat stroke: use the Heat stroke card and call 112.

PETS AND LIVESTOCK

Shade, extra water in the shade, no exercise in the heat. Short-nosed dogs struggle most.

HEATWAVE WARNINGS

The SA Weather Service warns of heatwaves. Plan water and a cool room before they arrive.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on SA Weather Service; WHO heat-health guidance. Free to print and share unchanged.

POISONOUS & EDIBLE PLANTS

POISON INFO	EMERGENCY	AMBULANCE
0861 555 777	112	10177

1 ONLY EAT WHAT YOU KNOW FOR SURE

If you can't name a plant with certainty, don't eat it. Many poisonous plants look like edible ones.

2 KNOW THE POISONOUS GARDEN PLANTS

Oleander (every part), syringa berries, castor oil seeds and moonflowers are highly toxic, especially to children.

3 THORN APPLE (STINKBLAAR)

A weed of farms and roadsides with spiky seed pods. The seeds and leaves cause confusion, a racing heart, fever and wide pupils.

4 KEEP MILKY SAP OFF SKIN AND EYES

Melkbos and other euphorbias have burning milky sap. Rinse eyes with lots of water for 15 minutes and get help.

5 CHILD ATE A PLANT?

Take what's left out of their mouth, rinse it and call Poison info on 0861 555 777. Have a piece or photo of the plant ready.

DO NOT

- Make anyone vomit
- Eat wild mushrooms nobody expert has identified
- Burn oleander or cook over its sticks
- Let livestock graze plakkies or Cape tulp

A FEW SAFE ONES

Sour fig (suurvy) fruit, spekboom leaves and prickly pear fruit (peel it carefully: the tiny spines hurt) are well known and safe to eat.

MUSHROOMS

Death cap mushrooms grow under oaks in the Western Cape and look ordinary. They can kill. Never eat wild mushrooms you aren't sure of.

PETS

Dogs and cats can be poisoned by garden plants and bulbs too. Call your vet straight away.

In an emergency, call 112 first. These cards don't replace first-aid training or medical care. Edition 0.9, November 2026. Based on SANBI PlantZAfrica; SA Poison Information Helpline. Free to print and share unchanged.