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## DWR considers making poisonous snakes legal

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SALT LAKE CITY -- Right now, it's illegal to catch and keep a rattlesnake in Utah, but that could soon change. The Division of Wildlife Resources is considering new rules that could allow people to keep the poisonous snakes indoors.

DWR says [the proposal](#) is an effort to try to make keeping snakes safer, even though they make a lot of people nervous. James Dix, who owns Reptile Rescue Service, says he's worried.

"If you get bit in a main artery, you could be dead in a matter of minutes," Dix says.

In his business, Dix captures snakes that wander into homes.

"We deal with hundreds of snake issues a year," Dix says.

The two species proposed are the Midget Faded Rattlesnake and the Great Basin Rattlesnake. The guidelines would allow for three of each species caught in Utah and six additional of each species if from out of state.

"What we're trying to do is be proactive and take a look at: Can we put some control on how many these people collect?" says Krissy Wilson, native species coordinator for DWR.

She says she knows people already have rattlesnakes illegally. She thinks this plan will make safety a priority.

"We're looking at what the cages will be constructed of, where they hold them, the security of the room, first aid kits," Wilson says.

The plan also allows for breeding up to 25 baby snakes that could be held for up to a year.

Dix, who has the state's only private permit to keep rattlesnakes for educational purposes, is worried about poisonous snakes getting loose.

"I've had to remove a lot of snakes in apartments and condos because they get loose and go up walls, through the heater vents and around the pipes," Dix says. "They're great escape artists."

DWR is planning public meetings throughout Utah to get input about these new rules. [\[CLICK HERE to view the meeting schedule\]](#)

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