



Snake and Porcupine Avoidance Training - Open to the Public

Thursday June 25, 2026



Sponsored By the Missouri Headwaters Gun Dog Club

What: This is an efficient and effective way to significantly reduce the potential for injury or death from snake bites or porcupine quills by using e-collar conditioning. While nothing is 100 % guaranteed, the avoidance training has proven to work very well. You can decide for yourself by retesting your dog or watching other dogs being retested. Nearly all dogs show strong avoidance behavior on retesting the following year, so additional retesting is typically not needed. Training may also help owners avoid snakes or porcupines by observing their dog's behavior in the field.

When: We will begin at 4:00 pm. To be efficient, please arrive early and get signed up. Club members with first-time dogs will go through first, followed by non-club members with first-time dogs. Club members with dogs to be retested will go next, then non-members with dogs to be retested going last. We will accommodate everyone who is in line. However, once the line has ended and the retesting dogs have been run, we will not set the training station up again for latecomers.

Where: The event will be held at the "Horse Pasture" training grounds. From Bozeman take Interstate 90 west 23 miles to exit 283 toward Logan Trident. Turn right on Buffalo Jump Road then go left on Frontage Road about 1 mile to Carpenter Road and take a right-hand turn and go about 2 miles. Enter through the green gate with the "Horses in Pasture" sign on your right side and please be sure to close it

Cost: The cost is the same per dog whether being trained to avoid snakes or porcupines. You may only train a dog for one species – snake or porcupine – on the same day. Retesting is not offered on the same day as the initial avoidance training.

* FIRST TIME DOGS: \$70.00 FOR CLUB MEMBERS; \$80.00 NON-MEMBERS

* RETESTING: \$45.00 FOR CLUB MEMBERS; \$55.00 NON-MEMBERS

How: The process to condition dogs to avoid snakes and porcupines in the field is relatively simple and quick. Bring your dog to the event with a strong, snug collar. Handlers will lead the dog to the conditioning area. The owner will not accompany the dog. There will be an e-collar placed on the dog. The dog will be led to an area downwind of the snake or porcupine, where it will be watched carefully for its reaction during this introduction. It is good if the dog wants to avoid the snake or porcupine, but it will be stimulated regardless, for reinforcement. If the dog is curious and approaches the snake or porcupine, it will be stimulated and then moved closer to the snake or porcupine and stimulated again. The process just takes a few seconds and then it is over. Retested dogs will only be stimulated if they show no avoidance behavior.

As a reminder no cameras are allowed. The dog must be wearing a strong collar with a metal buckle. We will try to provide one if you don't have one.

Text: Jim Lovell at 406-581-1244 with any additional questions.