

RATTLESNAKE AVOIDANCE TRAINING

Rattlesnake avoidance training has been proven to be safe, humane and effective in helping to prevent a dog from being bitten by a rattlesnake. Rattlesnakes can be found almost anywhere and their bites are quite common, dangerous and usually very expensive to treat IF the animal survives.

Gina Gables, owner of Ma & Paw Kennel since 1991, has been training dogs professionally for over 20 years. She specializes in behavior modification and problem solving for pet dogs *and* their owners. Her experience and sensitivity allows the dogs to be humanely treated during the training process. Gina personally trains every dog to recognize and avoid the scent, sound and sight of rattlesnakes it becomes aware of. Kent Beaman is a Research Associate in Herpetology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and at Loma Linda University. He also teaches biology courses at Riverside Community College and Chaffey College. Kent has over 20 years experience studying the behavior and ecology of rattlesnakes in the southwestern United States and Baja California

Our FIRST priority is the comfort and safety of all involved, dogs, humans and snakes. For the most effective training we use live rattlesnakes which have been hooded or have had their mouth banded shut to prevent them from being able to bite. Every precaution is taken to minimize danger to dogs, humans and snakes. The training takes place in a controlled environment using a remote electric training collar adjusted to **each** dogs' temperament, personality and physical response characteristics. Gina will use only the minimum level of stimulation necessary to achieve the desired results. The program consists of several phases. The trainer accompanied by the owner walk the dog on a 20 foot line to various staging areas:

FIRST PHASE: Sound Recognition

To teach your dog to recognize and avoid the sound of a rattlesnake the trainer accompanied by the owner will bring your dog to the first staging area where your

dog will be introduced to the **sound** of a rattlesnake. Stimulation from the remote training collar will be applied each time the dog shows interest in the sound of the rattle. When avoidance behavior is displayed by the dog we proceed to the next phase.

SECOND PHASE: Smell Recognition

To teach your dog to avoid the specific smell of a rattlesnake we will then introduce the dog to the **scent** of the specific rattlesnake species predominant in the area. Each time the dog shows an interest in the scent stimulation from the remote training collar will be applied. When avoidance behavior is displayed by the dog we proceed to the next phase.

THIRD PHASE: Sight Recognition

To teach your dog to avoid the sight of a rattlesnake the dog will then be brought to the next staging area to be introduced to the **sight** of a live rattlesnake. Stimulation will occur when your dog shows an interest in the presence of the snake. Again when avoidance behavior is displayed by the dog we proceed to the next phase.

Your dog will then have a second opportunity to be exposed to all of the above stimuli in separate locations on the course to help ensure through the process of elimination that your dog makes a negative association and displays the corresponding avoidance behavior toward the correct stimulus (sight sound or scent of the snake) and not something else on the course such as simply the general location on the course for example.

During the training, please pay attention to:

1-The trainer's instructions

2- Your dogs' body language (this can later alert *you* to the presence of a rattlesnake.)

****Yearly training is recommended to test, refresh and strengthen your dog's rattlesnake avoidance behavior**