

# HOUSE RULES FOR KEEPING SNAKES AS PETS IN SA



As if movies such as *Anaconda* and *Snakes on a Plane* didn't act as warning enough, many still choose scales over fur, venom over drool and fangs over puppy teeth. Though the SPCA opposes the trade of any exotic or wild animals (such as snakes) as pets, emphasising the often tremendous amounts of suffering experienced during the process of capturing these animals for resale, certain snake species may still be kept as pets in SA provided the owner has acquired the correct permits and

adheres to certain bylaws.

## **House Rule #1: Purchasing Permits**

Each local municipality will have its own bylaws regulating the ownership of exotic or wild animals. However, a permit is required in all nine provinces to import, export or transport an exotic or wild animal. If your pet shop or exotic animal dealer cannot show you these permits or explain to you where and how he obtained the animal, then chances are that you aren't dealing with a legitimate seller.

## **House Rule #2: Research & Care**

Another reason the SPCA sites for being against the private ownership of exotic animals is that even experts are not fully able to meet the needs of many of the reptile species. Reptiles are not the best adaptors to new environments, so you will need to do thorough research to ensure that you create an environment as close to its natural habitat as possible.

## **House Rule #3: Health & Safety**

There are also various health risks involved with keeping a snake as a pet. Parasites, which can be harmful to both yourself and your pet, can be a problem when keeping reptiles. You will need to speak to your vet to make sure you are using the correct cleaning agents for your serpent's lair, which you will need to clean daily, by the way.

## **House Rule #4: Responsible Ownership**

Homeowners should never adopt an exotic animal as a pet simply because they don't have the garden space for a more conventional one. Exotic animals are trickier to care for and should only be purchased if you have a passion for them. If not, then the more responsible thing to do would be to find a home that allows you the option to adopt a pet that doesn't require any special permissions or permits.