



How BearWise® Are You?

Bears are curious and will follow their powerful noses to just about anything with an odor (it doesn't have to be a good odor). Bears may also investigate anything they've learned can yield a food reward: garbage, birdseed, pet food, chickens, beehives...you get the idea.

Use our **Be BearWise Checklist** to learn what attracts bears and how you can keep bears away from your home and property.

BBQ Grills, Smokers

- Grill and/or smoker is stored inside when not in use. **If not:**
 - Drip pans and grates are cleaned after every use.
 - Grill/smoker is kept covered.
- Utensils are stored indoors.
- Food is not left unattended when cooking or eating outdoors.



Be BearWise:

Keep a look-out when you cook-out. Thoroughly clean grills and smokers.



Trash, Recycling

- All trash containers are cleaned often to reduce odors.
- Recycling is rinsed out and clean.
- Bear-resistant trash containers are always closed and latched.

If containers are not bear-resistant:

- Regular trash cans are stored inside a sturdy locked building or bear-resistant enclosure.
- Garbage is put out the morning of pick up (not the night before).



Be BearWise:

For certified bear-resistant containers and ways to modify your standard trash cans, visit BearWise.org.

Vehicles Parked Outside

- No food or anything with a fragrance is left in vehicles, car trunks or truck beds, including pet food, birdseed, food, beverages, scented air fresheners and trash.
- Vehicle windows are kept fully closed and doors locked.



Be BearWise:

Keep a small trash bag in your vehicle and empty daily. Use an odor-removing spray. Roll up and lock up.

Feeding Birds

- Birds/hummingbirds are not fed when bears are active in your area.
- Bird food is stored in bear-resistant containers or inside a sturdy, locked building.

If you feed birds when bears are active:

- Bird food and feeders are brought in nightly.
- Fallen birdseed and leftover food is picked up daily before dark.



Be BearWise:

Download our bulletin: *Attract Birds, Not Bears* for feeder-free options.

Feeding Pets, Strays

- Food is not put outside for stray animals or wildlife.
- Pets are fed indoors.

If you must feed pets outside:

- Pets are fed in single portions; bowls are removed and feeding area cleaned as soon as pets have eaten.
- Pet food is stored in a sturdy locked building or bear-resistant containers.



Be BearWise:

Download our bulletin: *Dogs + Bears = Problems* for more safety tips.

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Fruit Trees, Gardens

- Fallen fruit is picked up daily OR fruit is picked before it ripens.
- Fertilizers are free of blood-meal and bone-meal.
- Electric fencing protects the fruit trees, edible gardens, berry bushes, and ornamental fruit-bearing trees (such as flowering crabapples).



Be BearWise:

Avoid planting and consider removing ornamental fruit-bearing trees and bushes.

Compost

- Meat, bones, fish, oil, grease, dairy products, eggshells, garbage or large amounts of fruit are not put in the compost.
- Compost is protected with a bear-resistant enclosure or electric fence.



Be BearWise:

Follow USDA composting guidelines. Consider using an indoor composter.

Unexpected Attractants

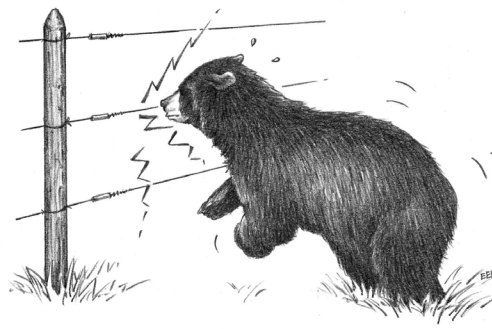
Be aware that some outdoor features that can't be removed or easily protected can attract bears, such as:

- ◆ Swimming pool, hot tub, pond, stream, water features.
- ◆ Nearby woods, dense bushes, conservation areas.
- ◆ Natural foods (i.e. berries, acorns).



Be BearWise:

Don't give naturally curious bears **any other reasons** to stick around and look for people-provided 'food'.



If properly installed for your soil conditions and maintained, electric fencing is an effective deterrent for keeping bears out.

Chickens, Farm Animals

Bear-resistant buildings, enclosures, containers and/or electric fences protect:

- Animals at night
- Newborns, always
- Livestock feed
- Dead animals are not buried near homes, buildings, livestock areas.



Be BearWise:

Take extra steps to keep your animals safe and their feed away from bears.

Bears may dig up buried carcasses. Consult your county for other options.

Beehives

- Permanent or portable electric fencing protects the beehives.
- Beehives are at least 3 feet away from the electric fencing.
- Beehives are at least 300 feet from dense bushes, trees or other places bears could hide.



Be BearWise:

Wisely locate and protect beehives. Spread the word to your fellow beekeepers.

Homes, Outbuildings

- **Doors and windows** in houses and outbuildings are kept closed and locked, especially at night or when people are not home. Pay special attention to sliding glass doors, inward-swinging doors, French doors and doors with lever handles.
- **Crawl spaces and small openings** under home and other buildings are barricaded before hibernation.
- **Refrigerators and freezers** are kept inside sturdy, locked buildings.
- Attractants are not stored on **upper-level balconies/decks** that bears can reach by climbing stairs, trees or deck posts.
- **Garage doors** are kept closed to keep bears away from stored attractants (i.e. pet food, birdseed, trash, food in fridge/freezer).
- **Coolers** with food/drinks are not stored on the porch, patio, deck or in a vehicle.
- **Pet doors** are locked at night.



Be BearWise:

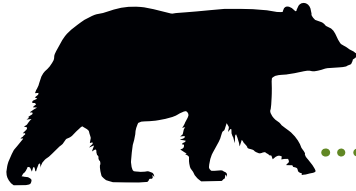
Screens don't keep out bears. Visit **BearWise.org** to learn how to use bear unwelcome mats and get other practical tips for keeping bears out.

Bears are smart, quick learners and may be active at any time of day.

Check with your state wildlife agency to find out when bears are most active in your area and what solutions are most effective (state and local regulations may vary).

Thanks for helping to keep people, pets and property safe and bears wild.





Stash, Latch, Secure Your Trash

It's garbage to us; it's dinner for days for bears. Trash is a smelly, concentrated and dependable source of easy, high-calorie meals. That's why trash attracts bears to homes and communities and keeps them coming back for more.



Trash Storage Solutions That Work

- 1 **Sturdy, Locked Building**
- 2 **Secure Trash Enclosure**
- 3 **Bear-Resistant Containers (Manufactured or Modified)**



Open doors are an open invitation to bears. Keep trash out of sight, smell and reach. Always close and lock doors and windows.



When building your own or buying a trash enclosure, choose durable construction and multiple latches or an auto-locking mechanism.



Ask your waste service company if they can provide a bear-resistant container (BRC). If not, ask if they will service modified trash cans or a BRC if you purchase one, and if containers must be unlatched before pick up.



Modified with 4 straps & buckles

How to modify a trash container (if allowed): use four nylon straps with buckles (not stretchy rubber straps) or locking metal hasps. Secure cans so bears can't "work" them.



A determined bear can easily claw through a wooden door. In areas where bears have learned to rely on human-provided food sources, steel doors or electric mats are recommended.



Power Up to Protect

Just one encounter with an electric fence or unwelcome mat delivers a shocking lesson that quickly teaches the bear to leave your stuff alone. **Getting zapped may hurt but doesn't harm.** Properly installed electric deterrents are safe for people, pets and bears. *CHECK LOCAL REGULATIONS.*



Electric unwelcome mats in front of doors and below windows will safely deter bears.



An electric fence makes a great enclosure for regular trash cans.



BearWise.org

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Keep bears out. Keep people and property safe and bears wild.

BearWise® Homeowners

- Always close and latch bear-resistant trash containers (BRCs). Keep containers that are not bear-resistant in a sturdy, locked building or bear-resistant enclosure.
- Put garbage (including any frozen food scraps) and recycling out the morning of pick up, not the night before.
- Never leave trash or food / animal feed in a vehicle or open truck bed. Clean truck beds often.
- Never store trash on or under decks, porches or balconies. Screens don't keep out bears.
- Rinse out cans, bottles and other recycling to reduce odors.
- Clean trash containers often. Avoid fruit-scented cleaners.



BearWise® Businesses

- Use bear-resistant containers / dumpsters / enclosures. Post clear instructions to lock after every use, even during the day.
- Post signage in common areas and parking lots to 'Stash & Latch Your Trash' and to lock vehicles.
- Educate residents, renters and visitors. Share BearWise materials.
- Train employees to recognize what attracts bears, to be vigilant and address issues immediately (i.e. pick up stray trash, verify containers are latched, patrol parking lots).
- Post signs and inform workers to never put food scraps or trash in open construction dumpsters.
- Clearly state trash policies, pick-up times and management's contact information. Ask people to report issues immediately.

Easy-to-access trash is the number one thing that attracts bears to homes and communities.



Enterprising bears have learned to recognize trash containers and deduce that where there is one, there are more. Trash smells like dinner to a bear, so anything you can do to reduce odors and make trash hard to get at will help deter bears.

Motion-Activated Devices

Motion-activated sprinklers and/or alarms may startle bears but are not permanent solutions. Use them while you pick the long-term solution that works best for you.



Composting Food Scraps?

If you live in active bear country, consider **an indoor composter** (available in various sizes). **If composting outside:** no meat, bones, fish, oil, grease, dairy products, eggshells, garbage or large amounts of fruit. Locate compost pile far away from your home and protect it with a bear-resistant enclosure or electric fence.



BearWise Can Help Visit BearWise.org

- More information about bear-resistant containers: [BearWise.org/keep-bears-out](https://www.bearwise.org/keep-bears-out)
- Free PDF downloads in our Store:
 - Action Plan for Communities
 - Electric Fences Keep Bears Out
 - BearWise At Home checklist
 - BearWise Guest checklist
- Stickers & Signs



Contact your state wildlife agency for other solutions that work in your area.

Thanks for doing your part to keep bears wild.





How to Be a BearWise Guest



Welcome to Bear Country

Black bears are curious, smart, resourceful and always looking for food. While seldom aggressive, black bears are powerful, unpredictable wild animals. Follow these BearWise guidelines to help keep people, pets and property safe, and bears wild.

Stash & Latch Trash



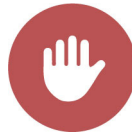
- Put all trash, food scraps and recycling in containers or enclosures provided.
- Make sure containers are **completely** closed and locked.
- Take trash with you if containers are full; don't leave it on the ground.
- Never store trash in a vehicle or on porch/deck/upper-level balcony.

Discourage Break-ins



- Keep exterior building doors closed, even when you are there. Lock doors at night.
- When you leave during the day, lock all windows and doors. Screens don't keep out bears.
- Lock vehicles; don't leave windows open even a crack. Remove anything with an odor (food, drinks, trash, scented products).
- Never store food, beverages, pet food, coolers on porches/decks.

Don't Feed Bears



- Feeding bears or using food to encourage bears to approach you is always dangerous and often illegal.
- Don't put out food to attract birds or small wildlife. You will attract bears, skunks and other critters.
- Throw food scraps into the trash, not "the woods." Even "harmless" scraps like apple cores teach bears to associate people with food.

Keep a Lookout During Cookouts



- Keep food and coolers within arm's reach; never leave unattended, even for a few minutes.
- Clean picnic tables after every meal. Remove all condiments and food.
- Store grill utensils inside and clean grill after every use.
- Never burn food scraps or trash in your fire ring or grill.

If You Encounter a Bear



- If a bear comes near your place, scare it away by making noise from a safe distance: yell, clap hands, bang pots together, use an air horn.
- Never try to get closer for a photo.
- Don't corner a bear; give it an escape route. Alert your host.

Outdoor Safety



- Hike in groups and stay together, especially kids.
- If you see a bear, watch quietly from a safe distance (at least 50 yards or 10 car lengths for black bears; 100 yards for grizzlies). Never approach.
- Never run from a bear. Carry bear spray (if permitted) and know how to use it. Learn more at BearWise.org.
- Be aware that bears are good swimmers and may enjoy the water, even with people around.

Traveling with Dogs?

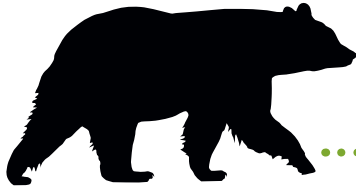


- Keep dogs on non-retractable leashes at all times, or leave them at home. Don't force a bear to defend itself.
- Don't let dogs bark at, harass, chase or corner a bear.
- Keep pet food in your room/cabin. Feed dogs inside, if possible. Never leave food/water bowls outside.
- If your dog gets into an encounter with a bear, don't try to rescue it. You will get injured. Use bear spray; it works from 30 feet away.

Ask your host if bears have been active in the area. Follow any recommended special precautions and local regulations.

Black bear is a species; common colors include black, brown and cinnamon.





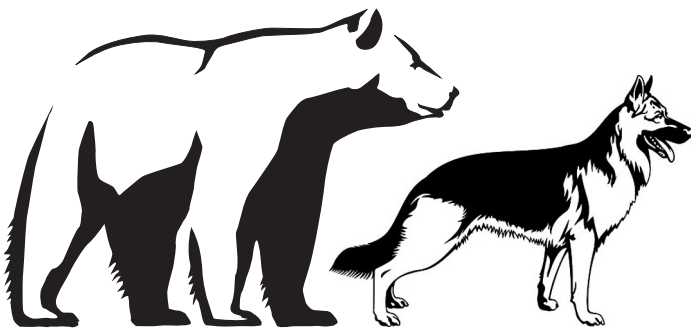
Dogs + Bears = Problems

If you live in or travel to bear country and own a dog, sooner or later your dog may encounter a bear. Understanding why some encounters end peacefully and others end with dogs and people being injured or killed can help keep people, dogs and bears safe.



*Don't force a mother black bear to defend her cubs.
(Photo: Warren Holland; Durango, Colorado)*

Dogs were involved in more than half of the incidents involving people and black bears between 2010 – 2015. Just under half (46%) of those dogs were injured or killed; their human companions did not fare quite as well, with 62% of them being injured. Many of the dogs involved had been off-leash, a situation that can easily result in the dog chasing or cornering a bear and being injured, killed, or turning tail and running back to its owner with an aggravated bear close behind.



Black bears can weigh 300 pounds or more, depending on age, sex and time of year. A popular large dog breed, the German Shepherd, averages only 70 pounds.



Why Bears and Dogs Don't Get Along

Black bears are neither confrontational nor aggressive by nature. As a species, black bears evolved in forested habitats where they learned to respond to danger and avoid trouble by climbing a tree or disappearing into the woods. When those options aren't available, a bear's natural instinct for self-preservation kicks in, and the bear will defend itself, its food, or its cubs.

Dog behavior is more complex; not all dogs bark for the same reasons. Some breeds bark, lunge and bite out of fear; others have an innate drive to bark and chase. Protective breeds may be trying to guard their humans. And some dogs just really love to bark. But to the bear, your dog's motivation doesn't matter. A barking, lunging, snapping or chasing dog is seen as a threat. It's very likely the bear will respond by defending itself.

Bears Will Protect Their Food

Bears will typically defend any food source, particularly something as calorie-rich as pet food, garbage or birdseed. A dog that interrupts a bear's dinner is asking for trouble. A person who comes between a defensive bear and an aggressive dog is putting their life at risk.

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When Dogs Chase Bears

Bears can run faster than an Olympic sprinter for short distances; if you're lucky, the bear will escape from your dog. If you're not lucky, the bear will have to defend itself against your dog. Dog vs. bear seldom ends well for the dog.

If you are very unlucky, the dog will realize it has picked a fight it can't win, turn tail and run back to you. If the bear gives chase, you and the dog become one big problem the bear needs to neutralize so it can feel safe again.



Bears Don't Like To Be Cornered

A black bear's natural instinct is to avoid confrontation. That's why the most common bear sightings consist of the tail end of the bear disappearing into the trees. If you encounter a bear AND your dog is on a leash AND you can keep it from lunging at the bear, the bear will most likely run away. If your dog is not on a leash, you are increasing

the chances that a bear encounter will escalate into a dangerous situation.



Wolves, coyotes, bobcats, eagles and male bears all prey on black bear cubs. To a mother bear, a barking dog is another potentially dangerous predator that means harm; if she cannot quickly or easily get her cubs to safety, she will defend them.

Living With Dogs in Bear Country

- Feed pets indoors, if possible.
- If you must feed pets outside, feed only single portions and remove bowls as soon as your pet is finished.
- Keep your dog on a non-retractable leash even if you're just going to the car.
- Install motion-activated security lights. Check the yard and bang on your door before you let your dog out.
- If you see a bear, bring your dog inside. Don't allow it to bark at or harass the bear, even from inside a fenced yard.
- Pet doors should open into completely enclosed areas; some bears can squeeze through openings as small as nine inches high. Cubs (and other critters you don't want in the house) can fit through even smaller openings.
- If your dog gets into an encounter with a bear, don't try to rescue it. If you can do so from a safe distance, use your bear spray or a high-powered garden hose.

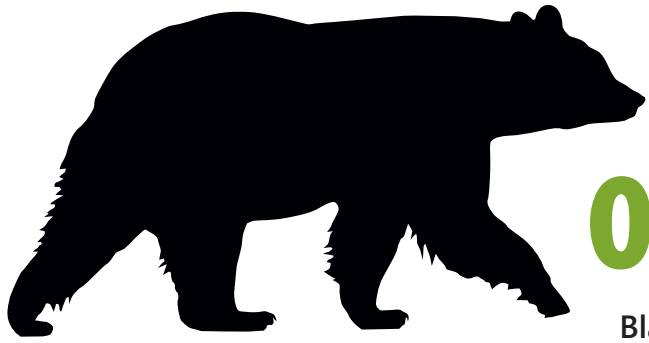
Out Walking Your Dog?

- Keep your dog on a non-retractable leash at all times.
- Carry bear spray and know how to use it.
- Stay alert; music and phones are distracting.
- Avoid walking at dawn, dusk or at night in areas with known bear activity.
- If you see a bear, turn around and leave.
- Don't let your dog bark at, harass, chase, or corner a bear.
- If your dog gets into a fight with a bear, don't try to rescue it. You will get injured. Instead, use your bear spray.

**Making the right choices can keep dogs and people safe and bears wild.
Making the wrong choices can have serious consequences for all. Be BearWise.**

Leashes Save Lives Letting your dog run free in the neighborhood or the woods is usually illegal and always dangerous. A much higher percentage of dogs that get into confrontations with bears are seriously injured or killed when dogs are off leash. The people who try to rescue a dog are also more seriously injured. It may be tempting to let your dog run free, but don't put your dog and yourself at risk. **Please, leash up.**





BearWise

Outdoor Safety Tips

Black bears are seldom aggressive and rarely injure people. Follow these BearWise tips to avoid encounters.

Camping



- Keep a clean camp.
- Don't burn food scraps or trash in your fire ring or grill.
- **Do not store food, trash, clothes worn when cooking, or toiletries in your tent.** Store in approved bear-resistant containers OR out of sight in a locked vehicle OR suspended at least 10 feet above the ground and 10 feet from any part of the tree. *Local storage regulations vary.*
- Cook downwind and as far from your tent as possible.
- Set up backcountry camps away from dense cover and natural food sources.



Precautions for Cycling, Jogging

If you travel quickly or quietly, you can easily surprise bears. **Stay alert;** music and phones are distracting. Be aware of your surroundings; make noise periodically.

Hiking, Walking



- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Try not to hike alone.
- Keep kids within sight and close by.
- Make noise periodically so bears in the area can avoid you.
- **Keep dogs leashed at all times, or leave them at home.** Don't force a bear to defend itself.
- Double bag your food and pack out all food and trash. *Leaving scraps, wrappers or "harmless" items like apple cores teaches bears to associate trails and campsites with food.*

Fishing, Hunting



- You are more likely to encounter bears when moving quietly and traveling early and late day when bears are most active.
- Follow tips for hiking and camping safely.
- Know that carcasses, gut piles, and bait may attract bears.
- If a bear beats you to your catch or kill, don't try to reclaim it; leave the area when it is safe to do so.



Carry Bear Spray & Know How To Use It

Keep bear spray accessible; it's proven to be the easiest and most effective way to deter a bear that threatens you. It doesn't work like bug repellent, so **never** spray your tent, campsite or belongings.

If You Encounter a Black Bear

- **If you see a bear before it notices you,** don't approach. Stand still, enjoy the moment, then quietly move away.
- **If a bear sees you,** back away slowly. Never run; running may trigger a chase response.
- **If a bear approaches,** hold your ground, wave your arms and yell "Hey Bear" until it leaves. Always stay with your group. **If the bear keeps approaching,** use bear spray.
- **If a black bear makes contact with you,** do NOT play dead; fight back aggressively.



Black bear is a species; colors include black, brown and cinnamon.

