



# BearWise Outdoor Safety Tips

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

## Hiking



- 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.
- Double bag your food and pack out all food and trash. *Leaving scraps, wrappers or even "harmless" items like apple cores teaches bears to associate trails and campsites with food.*

## 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.

## 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.

## Precautions for Dog Walkers, Cyclists and Joggers



- **Always keep dogs leashed.** Letting dogs chase or bark at bears is asking for trouble; don't force a bear to defend itself.
- 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.