

Be Bear Wise

How to avoid encounters with black bears while camping.



BEARS CAN
BE DANGEROUS

When enjoying Ontario's campsites, lakes, forests and hiking trails, remember that you're in the natural habitat of black bears. Bears have a keen sense of smell, and are attracted by the odour of human food and garbage. To avoid conflicts with bears, prepare ... and be aware.

If you would like to report a bear problem, call 1 866 514-2327. In a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or the local police.

Know before you go:

- You are responsible for your own safety. Plan your trip with safety in mind. Before you go, learn about black bears to recognize signs of bear activity (like tracks and droppings), and how to prevent and handle encounters with bears.
- Think about how you will handle your garbage, and how you will keep your campsite clean and odour free.
- Pack long ropes for hanging your food pack. Practise hanging a pack before you go.
- If you are bringing children, always keep an eye on them. When hiking, it is wise to keep children between adults.
- Consider bringing a whistle, air horn, long-handled axe or bear spray. If you bring bear spray, know how to use it.
- Before you leave home, discuss bears with children. Teach children simple things like making sure they can always see an adult; to never approach a bear or other animals; to never run from a bear and if they see a bear to stay calm and call for help.
- Keep dogs away from bears. The bear may follow the dog back to its owner.
- All odours attract bears. Pack all food, including dog food, with special care. Double or triple bagged food will reduce smells. Consider choosing meals that require minimal preparation.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources or Ontario Parks can provide general information about recent campsite or route closures due to bear problems. Keep in mind, however, that bear activity cannot be predicted.

Visit ontario.ca/bearwise for more information on bears:

- What to do if you encounter a bear
- Be safe in bear country
- What to do if you encounter a black bear while enjoying the outdoors.

There's more, over ►►

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At your campsite:

- Look for signs of bear activity nearby. Consider moving elsewhere if it appears a black bear has been active in the area.
- No matter where you camp, always pack out all garbage from the backcountry and use bear-resistant containers where available.
- Store food so bears cannot access it; in a bear resistant location or container or hanging at least 4 metres (13 feet) above the ground and 3 metres (10 feet) from tree limbs or trunks that can support a bear.
- If you plan to camp in remote areas you should take additional precautions to ensure your personal safety.
- If you are going to an Ontario Park or a private campground, follow advice provided.
- Eliminate or reduce odours from yourself, your camp, your clothes and your vehicle.
- Never feed or approach a bear.
- Clean fish away from your campsite.
- Store leftover food away from your campsite in sealed plastic bags and, if possible, in bear-resistant containers.
- Burn food scraps and fat drippings thoroughly in a fire. Drain dish water away from your camp site.
- Never cook, eat or store any food (including snacks), cooking equipment or toiletries in your tent.
- If you are sleeping in a tent, try not to sleep in clothes you have worn while cooking.
- Fishing tackle and bait, clothes worn while cooking, garbage, toiletries and all snacks should be unavailable to bears, stored in a bear-resistant manner and away from the site.

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