

How to avoid encounters *while camping.*

When enjoying Ontario's campsites, lakes, forests and hiking trails, it's wise to 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.

**BEARS CAN
BE DANGEROUS**



In an immediate emergency, call your local police or 911. To report bear problems call:

1 866 514-2327

(1 866 514-BEAR)

TTY 705 945-7641

For more information, visit our website:

ontario.ca/bearwise

What campers can do – 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; signs of bear activity (like tracks and scat), and how to prevent and handle encounters with bears
- If you are bringing children, always keep an eye on them. When hiking, it is wise to keep children between adults
- Before you go, 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
- If you plan on bringing a dog, you should verify whether there are any rules that prohibit dogs or require them to be on a leash
- All food odours can attract bears. Pack all food, including dog food, with special care. Double or triple bag food to reduce smells. Consider choosing meals that require minimal preparation
- Think about how you will handle your garbage, and how you will keep your campsite clean and odour free. Your safety and that of other campers depends on your diligence to keep the area clean and free from all odours
- Pack a couple of long ropes for hanging your food pack. Practice hanging a pack before you go
- Think about bringing a whistle, air horn, long-handled axe or pepper spray. If you bring pepper spray, know how to use it
- The Ministry of Natural Resources or an Ontario Parks Office can provide general information about recent campsite or route closures due to bear problems. Keep in mind, however, that bear activity can not be predicted
- Once in a while people will encounter black bears. Have a plan in mind if a bear enters your campsite
- People are rarely attacked and/or killed by black bears. Nonetheless, it is important that you be prepared to handle an encounter or an attack

For more information on bear encounters, see our Fact Sheets "What to do if you encounter a bear" and "Be safe in bear country". For more information on avoiding encounters, see our Fact Sheets "How to avoid encounters with black bears while enjoying the outdoors" and "What to do if you encounter a black bear while enjoying the outdoors".

There's more ...
see over!



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What campers can do – at your campsite

- If you are going to an Ontario Park or a private campground do follow advice provided by their staff
- No matter where you camp, always pack out all garbage from the backcountry and use bear-resistant containers where available
- Be aware that all food odours and residues can attract bears, so do everything you can to 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
- After a meal, store leftover food away from your campsite in sealed plastic bags and, if possible, in bear resistant containers
- Keep your site clean. 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 to not sleep in clothes you have worn while cooking meals
- Store food so that bears cannot reach it – in the trunk of your car or hanging at least 4 metres (13 feet) above the ground and 3 metres from tree limbs or trunks that can support a bear. Fishing tackle, clothes worn when cooking, garbage, toiletries and all snacks should also be hung. If you cannot hang your pack, put it in a canoe or boat that is anchored offshore
- Look for signs of bear activity nearby. Consider moving elsewhere if it appears as though a black bear has been active in the area
- If you plan to camp in remote areas you should take additional precautions to ensure your personal safety

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