

Bear Encounters



Bear Encounters

Black bears by nature tend to be wary of people. However, if you encounter a black bear in your neighborhood or outdoors while hiking or camping, follow these common-sense safety tips.

✗ DON'T

- **Do not feed bears.**
- **Do not approach bears.** Especially feeding bears, which will aggressively defend their food.
- **Do not run from bears.** Running may trigger a chase response.
- **Do not make direct eye contact.** Bears may perceive this as a challenge.

☑ DO

- **Remain calm and slowly back away.**
- **Make the bear aware of you.**
- **Be loud:** speak in an assertive voice, yell, sing, or clap your hands. If available, bang pots and pans or use an airhorn.
- **Make yourself look big.** Wave your arms. Hold your jacket above your head.
- **If you're in a group, stay together** and perform these actions together.
- **Make sure the bear has an escape route.** If a bear enters your home, prop all the doors open.
- **If the bear doesn't leave, move to a secure area.**
- If your family lives in an area frequented by black bears, **create a "Bear Plan" for children**, with an escape route and planned use of whistles and air horns.
- Black bear attacks are extremely rare. **If a black bear does attack, fight back!** Aim for the snout and/or eyes. Use anything at hand: (knife, sticks, rocks, binoculars, backpack or kick the bear).
- **-Report black bear damage or nuisance behavior to the DEP's 24-hour, toll-free hotline at 1-877-WARN DEP (1-877-927-6337).**

⚠ REMEMBER

- **The bear may utter a series of huffs, make popping sounds by snapping its jaws and swat the ground. These are warning signs that you are too close.** Slowly back away, avoid direct eye contact and do not run.
- **If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect scents in the air.** It is usually not a threatening behavior.
- **Black bears will sometimes "bluff charge" when cornered, threatened, or attempting to steal food.** Stand your ground, avoid direct eye contact, then slowly back away and do not run.



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