



What to do if you see or encounter a bear on your property.

Black bears live mostly in forested areas where they are best able to find food, winter den sites and refuge. With human activity, development and population increasing in what we often call "bear country" or "cottage country" so too are the possibilities for people to see or encounter bears. Knowing what to do if you see a bear on your property is being Bear Wise.



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

Every encounter with a black bear is unique. The following information is what experts recommend you do. There is no guarantee that what works in one instance will work in another.

Black Bear safety basics:

- Never approach the bear to get a better look
- Do not attempt to feed a bear
- Anticipate and avoid encounters
- Know what to do if you encounter a bear
- Learn about bears and their behaviour
- When outdoors, supervise children and never leave pets unattended

If you spot a black bear:

- Stay calm. Often the bear is simply passing through
- Do not run away. Walk towards a building or vehicle and get inside
- If you have children and pets, bring them inside too
- Once indoors, observe the bear. Did it move on or did it stay on your property? If the bear stayed, what was it doing or eating?
- Encourage the bear to leave. Bang pots and pans, or blow an air horn or whistle. The more stressful a bear's encounter with you, the less likely it is to come back
- If the bear got food (like garbage or bird food), or if the bear tried to get food, you will need to remove or control the item that attracted the bear
- Once the bear leaves, remove the attractant and assess your property for other possible attractants like garbage; dirty barbecue; bird or pet food or fruit or berries from your trees or bushes
- It is possible for a bear to return even though you removed the attractant. Bears do return to places where they have found food. Once the bear does not get food, it will move on
- If you have done everything you can to remove attractants, and the bear persists, call 1-866-514-2327
- If a bear is damaging your property, breaking into your home or threatening your personal safety or that of others, call 911 or your local police
- Alert your neighbours about bear activity, and work together to keep your neighbourhood free from items that attract bears
- Work with your municipality to solve problems before they happen
- If a bear is in a tree, leave it alone. Remove people and dogs from the area. The bear will usually come down and leave when it feels safe

NOTE: If you have shot a bear in defense of your property, you are required by law to immediately report it to your local Ministry of Natural Resources office either in person or by telephone. This requirement applies whether you intend to keep the bear or not. Failure to do so is a violation of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.

To learn more about bear encounters, see our Fact Sheets "Be safe in bear country" and "What to do if you encounter a bear".

There's more ...
see over!

