

Essentials for Living with bears

Homeowner Checklist

Bear proofing your yard and neighborhood can help avoid potentially dangerous bear encounters and keep Oregon's bears safe and where they belong – in the wild.

Most problems are caused by people feeding bears, either actively or inadvertently. Once habituated to find food near homes, bears can become a threat to human safety and must often be euthanized. Follow these guidelines to protect both humans and bears.

- Keep pet food indoors. Feed pets in the house, garage or enclosed kennel.
- Hang bird feeders from a wire at least 10 feet off the ground and 6 to 10 feet from the trunk of tree.
- Remove fruit that has fallen from trees.
- Add lime to compost piles to reduce odors — do not compost meat, bones, fruit, dairy products or grease.
- Secure garbage cans in a garage, shed or behind a chain link or electric fence.
- Put garbage cans out just before pick-up time, not the night before.
- Purchase bear-proof garbage cans if necessary.
- Take garbage with you when leaving your vacation home.
- Clean garbage containers regularly with bleach or moth balls to reduce odors.
- Use electric fencing to keep bears from orchards, gardens, compost, beehives and berries.
- Store livestock food in a secure place.
- Don't leave scented candles, soap or suntan lotions outdoors or near open windows.
- Keep barbeques clean. Store them in a shed or garage.
- Talk to neighbors to encourage everyone in the neighborhood to remove attractants.
- Stay indoors and allow a snooping bear to move on.
- Never, ever feed a bear.
- Teach children about bear safety.

Bear resistant containers and garbage cans

While ODFW has not tested these bear-proof products, several groups have. USDA Recreation tech tips: [Bear-Resistant Containers for Rafters](#) (pdf)

Among the suppliers are:

[Wild Ideas](#)

[Bear Vault](#)

Products that have passed inspection under the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Testing Program can be viewed at the [Interagency Grizzly Bear committee website](#).

Among the suppliers are: [IGBC Certified Bear-Resistant Products](#)

Containment in the wild

- Store food in airtight containers in the trunk of your car, in bear boxes or on platforms
- Hang food bagged food 10-12 feet high and 6-10 feet from tree trunk or side support.
- Do not leave food items or pet food outdoors or in tents. Clean all food preparation and eating utensils immediately after using them, and place them in vehicles or other sealed, bear-proof containers.
- Dispose of garbage in bear-proof cans or pack it out.
- Do not bury garbage — bears will dig it up.

Camp safely

- Keep campsites and campfire areas clean.
- Sleep at least 100 yards from cooking/eating areas.
- Keep dogs on leashes or in cars.
- Never pick up a bear cub — its mother has left it there and will return.
- Stay clear of berry patches.
- Don't leave soap, suntan lotion, candles, scented items outdoors or in tent.
- Pitch your tent away from dense brush or trees — avoid what might be an animal trail to a river or stream
- Use a flashlight at night.
- Don't camp or hike alone.
- Teach children about bear safety.

Hike safely

- Avoid trails with bear tracks or bear signs.
- Make noise when hiking so as not to surprise a bear.
- If you see a bear, leave the area.
- Stay far away from cubs—mother is nearby.
- Leash dogs. A loose dog may lead a bear back to you.
- Don't hike after dark.
- Consider carrying bear spray in areas known to have bears



Guidelines for anglers and hunters

Fishing or hunting in bear country brings some additional challenges, so take extra caution.

Manage food and refuse

- Keep food in bear-proof containers.
- Place all garbage and fish refuse in sealed, bear-proof containers.
- Keep campsites and campfire areas clean.
- Do not bury garbage or fish refuse; bears will dig it up.

Be safe while fishing

- Fish with at least one other person
- Talk loudly around a stream – carry a whistle to use to alert bears of your presence.
- Avoid berry patches
- If you see a bear or fresh bear sign, leave the area
- Clean fish at designated cleaning stations.

Hunting Black Bears

Bears are hunted in Oregon in controlled hunting seasons. Cubs and sows with cubs are protected. See current year [Oregon Big Game Regulations](#) for more information.

[Controlled hunt navigation](#)

Important notice to bear hunters: ODFW researchers are asking successful bear hunters to submit the bear's premolar tooth and female reproductive organs to help with an important census study designed to more accurately estimate Oregon's bear population. For more information, [call your local ODFW office](#).

Be safe while hunting

- Always be aware of surroundings; be cautious.
- Be aware that by calling another animal, you may attract a bear.
- Carry bear pepper spray and know how to use it.
- Watch for fresh bear signs.
- Be careful when field-dressing a deer or elk. Make noise; talk and laugh so bears know you are there.
- If you must leave a deer or elk carcass overnight, hang it at least 10-12 feet off the ground and 6-10 feet from nearby trees in an open area.