



Bear Safety



Black bears and grizzly bears thrive in Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. You may encounter a bear anywhere at anytime. Some of the most popular trails pass through excellent bear habitat. Bears will usually move out of the way if they hear you approaching.

Your safety is important to us. Please review the following bear safety information before hiking or camping in the park.

Make Noise

Do not surprise bears! Make noise when you are hiking or away from your vehicle. Bears will usually move out of the way if they hear you approaching. Calling out (such as 'Hey Bear') and clapping your hands at regular intervals are the best ways to make your presence known. Bear bells are not sufficient.

Some trail conditions make it difficult for bears to hear, see, or smell approaching hikers. Be particularly careful near streams, when it is windy, in dense vegetation, or in any circumstance that limits line of sight (such as a blind corner or rise in the trail). Be aware of your surroundings. The use of portable audio devices is strongly discouraged.

Hike in Groups

If possible, hike in groups of three or more people. Typically, larger groups of people make more noise and appear more formidable to bears. Keep your group together and make sure your children are

close to you at all times. Avoid hiking when bears are more active; early in the morning, late in the day or when it is dark. Trail running is strongly discouraged; you may startle a bear.

Bear Spray

Bear spray is extremely effective to deter bear attacks. Bear spray is a non-toxic and non-lethal means of warding off aggressive bears. It temporarily affects the bear's respiratory system and mucus membranes.

Keep bear spray immediately available on your belt or your pack's waist strap, not in your pack. Use only bear spray; personal self-defense pepper spray is not effective. Bear spray is not a repellent. Bear spray should never serve as a

substitute for standard safety precautions in bear country. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Know how to use it, and be aware of limitations, including the expiration date.

For your protection, do not remove the safety clip unless you are preparing to use the spray. It may accidentally discharge. Never store the bear spray in a vehicle. It may explode due to heat. Keep out of reach of children. Ask a ranger for additional information.

Stay with Your Food

DO NOT leave backpacks, coolers, or anything with an odor unattended for ANY length of time. Your food should always be within arm's reach or properly stored.

DO NOT allow bears to obtain human food. Allowing a bear to obtain human food, even once, often results in aggressive and dangerous behavior. The bear is then a threat to human safety and must

be relocated or killed.

If approached by a bear while eating, put food away and retreat to a safe distance. Never abandon food because of an approaching bear. Always take the food with you.

Never throw your pack or food at a bear in an attempt to distract it.

Traveling in Bear Country

Keep it Stored!

Black and grizzly bears can be anywhere in the park at anytime. Odors attract bears into parking lots, campgrounds and picnic areas.

When not in immediate use, store all items with an odor in a bear-resistant food storage locker or in a hard-sided vehicle with doors locked and windows closed day and night. Do not leave coolers in the back of a truck or strapped to a rack. Only have the items out that you are actually using, and restore them when finished.

Never store food, garbage, or toiletries in tents. Improperly stored or unattended food will be confiscated and you could be cited and fined.

Properly store:

- Food and drinks (including water)
- Coolers and food containers (empty or full)
- Stoves and grills
- Cookware (clean or dirty)
- Toiletries including bug repellent and sunscreen
- Pet food and bowls
- Garbage in a bear-resistant dumpster.

Be Bear Aware! It all smells to a bear, please take care and lock it up! If in doubt, store it.

Immediately report careless campers and all bear sightings to the campground kiosk or nearest ranger.

Bear Encounters

If a bear approaches or charges you,

DO NOT RUN!

Most bear attacks result from surprise encounters when a bear is defending her young or a food source, such as a carcass. Some bears will bluff their way out of a threatening situation by charging, then veering off or stopping abruptly. Bear experts generally recommend standing still until the bear stops and then slowly backing away.

If you are attacked, drop to the ground and lie completely flat on your stomach. Spread your legs slightly and clasp your hands over the back of your neck. Do not move until you are certain the bear has left.

In rare cases, bears have attacked people at night or after stalking them. These types of attacks may mean the bear views you as prey. If you are attacked at night or as prey, or you feel you are being stalked, fight back. Do whatever you can to let the bear know you are not easy prey.

What Kind of Bear?

Black Bear

- Color varies from blonde to black
- Face profile is straight from nose to ear
- No distinctive shoulder hump
- Ears are tall and pointed
- Front claws are short and curved (1-2" long)

Grizzly Bear

- Color varies from blonde to black
- Face profile appears dished in
- Distinctive shoulder hump
- Ears are short and rounded
- Front claws are long and less curved (2-4" long)

