

Spring is a time when bears are very active looking for food and mates. Many work sites are in bear territory, so you need to be aware.

A few points to remember:

- Never feed wildlife.
- Dispose of waste in proper receptacles.
- Make noise so bears can hear you coming.
- Be aware of your surroundings (situational awareness) and keep an eye out for signs of bears, such as tracks or scat.
- Stay calm if you see a bear. Do not startle the bear and never run from one.

## KNOW THE RISK

By understanding a few variables, you can assess the risk at your work site. Energy Safety Canada's [Bear Awareness: A Program Development Guideline](#) includes the [Wildlife Risk Matrix](#).

The risk matrix includes variables that contribute to the likelihood of an encounter, such as:

- How often is a bear sighted and at what distance?
- What time of day are bears more likely to be sighted (e.g. dawn and dusk)?
- Are bears in mating season or seen with young?
- Is there food that may attract bears (e.g. berries, animal carcass, human food, garbage or waste)?
- Are you working alone or in a group?

You must also determine the bear's level of aggression based on variables such as:

- What body language is the bear exhibiting?
- What sounds is it making?
- Is it approaching? Leaving the area?
- How does the bear react to humans (timid and shy, unconcerned, aggressive)?

## BEAR RISK MANAGEMENT

Do you know your site's risk level? Depending on the risk variables, a variety of controls are warranted.

These controls are categorized into four risk levels:

- Level 1: Prevention and avoidance controls that should be maintained during all field activities.
- Level 2: Activated upon sighting a carnivore (bear, wolf, cougar, coyote) or large ungulate (deer, elk, caribou, moose, bison).
- Level 3: Activated upon sighting of a bear.
- Level 4: Implement if bear is considered a potential or real threat to personnel.

Specific controls for each level are listed in the [Wildlife Risk Matrix](#).



## WHAT CAN SUPERVISORS DO?

- Ensure a wildlife risk assessment is completed and reviewed, and you understand and follow the controls (NOTE: Prime Contractor is required to complete this assessment).
- Report all wildlife sightings to your supervisor and the Prime Contractor.
- Ensure history of bear sightings is reviewed with all personnel on site, particularly personnel who are new to the site.
- Ensure fencing and lighting are adequate.
- Review with your workers which vehicles and buildings should be used for shelter, and the available escape routes and muster points if a bear comes on site.
- Review with your workers how to respond to a bear encounter.
- For sites where a bear encounter is expected, ensure a dedicated bear monitor is present. A bear monitor is a person solely dedicated to monitoring for bears and is equipped and trained to use bear deterrents.
- Ensure your workers have bear awareness training.

## WHAT CAN WORKERS DO?

- Refer to your bear awareness training.
- Immediately notify your supervisor if you see a bear or spot any signs of a bear, such as tracks or scat.
- Follow your company's procedures such as always closing and securing camp fencing gates during entry and exit.
- Properly dispose of garbage and waste.
- Never feed wildlife.
- Keep pepper spray handy and know the types of bear behaviours so you can assess the danger.
- Ensure that you are trained in the storage, use, transportation and disposal of pepper spray.
- Know what to do when a bear comes on site.
- Know your escape routes and muster points depending on where a bear is observed on site.

## PRESENT LIKE A PRO

### Before you begin:

Understand the topic and how it applies to you and your team.

Research your own company's experience and provide examples that pertain to your work areas.

### Involve the group:

Conduct a wildlife risk assessment of your work site.

Review your controls and discuss whether they are adequate.

Discuss what vehicles or buildings on your work site would provide adequate shelter from a bear.

Share past experiences or incidents involving bears or other wildlife.

Ask the group to discuss what they would do if a bear came on site.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Bear Management Guideline](#)
- [Bear Awareness Training](#)
- [Wildlife Awareness Training \(includes Bear Awareness\)](#)
- [Frontline - Spring 2015 Bear Article](#)
- [Lease Lighting Guideline](#)

