

BearWise Lodging



SAFETY TIPS



How to Be a BearWise Host

Educating guests and implementing BearWise practices is the best way to keep people and property safe and bears wild. Bears in search of food can destroy trash containers, break into vehicles and lodging, and frighten guests and staff. Follow these tips to help prevent conflicts with bears.

Educate Guests & Staff

- Provide BearWise materials before guests arrive and during their stay. Download materials at [BearWise.org/Store](https://www.bearwise.org/store).
- Post **Be BearWise Guest Checklist** (see next page) in common areas and in rooms.
- Remind guests to Be BearWise by **posting room signs**:
 - Never leave food, trash or scented items in vehicles.
 - Don't leave food or coolers unattended.
 - Throw food scraps/grease in the trash, not "the woods."
- If you allow pets: require leashes when dogs are outside; post the **Dogs + Bears = Trouble** poster; refer to checklist (next page) for more safety precautions.
- Do tell guests about recent bear activity and any special precautions. Don't tell guests about local hot-spots where bears can be seen due to human-provided attractants.

Don't Feed the Wildlife

Intentionally feeding bears or allowing them to find anything that smells or tastes like food teaches bears to approach people and places looking for more.

- Birdseed and nectar feeders attract bears. See our bulletin **Attract Birds, Not Bears** for tips on going feeder-free.
- Please don't put out food to attract wildlife. You'll attract bears, skunks, snakes and other unwelcome critters.



PHOTO: LYNN BYSTROM

Provide Bear-Resistant Containers

Garbage smells delicious to a bear. Consistent use of bear-resistant containers (BRCs) is the most effective way to keep bears out of the trash and discourage them from exploring.

Where to find BRCs: Ask your waste services provider, purchase your own, or retrofit your containers (verify that your trash hauler can service BRCs). Find more resources online at [BearWise.org/Keep-Bears-Out/](https://www.bearwise.org/keep-bears-out/).

Other Options: Store trash inside an electric fence, bear-resistant enclosure or a sturdy, locked building. Educate guests on how to access, so they don't leave trash outside.

- **Never let unsecured trash sit outside.**
- **Always latch / lock trash containers**, even during the day. Use BearWise Stash & Latch stickers to remind guests.

Inspect the Property

- Make sure windows and doors close and lock securely; bears can easily open unlocked French and lever-style doors.
- Bears are nimble climbers. Trim tree limbs that provide easy access (for a bear) to second-floor decks or windows.
- Avoid planting—or remove—natural bear foods, such as fruit or nut-bearing trees or bushes.
- Electric deterrents are very effective at securing areas or places from bears (post clear usage instructions for guests). Learn more at [BearWise.org](https://www.bearwise.org) and download our **Electric Fences Keep Bears Out** bulletin.

Remind guests that not following BearWise advice can have serious consequences for them, all the guests who come after them, and the bears.

Bears are highly intelligent and quickly learn from experiences. Bears that are rewarded for coming around usually come back. Learn about coexisting with black bears at [BearWise.org](https://www.bearwise.org).





How to Be a BearWise Guest



Welcome to Bear Country

Black bears are curious, smart, resourceful and always looking for food. While seldom aggressive, black bears are powerful, unpredictable wild animals. Follow these BearWise guidelines to help keep people, pets and property safe, and bears wild.

Stash & Latch Trash



- Put all trash, food scraps and recycling in containers or enclosures provided.
- Make sure containers are **completely** closed and locked.
- Take trash with you if containers are full; don't leave it on the ground.
- Never store trash in a vehicle or on porch/deck/upper-level balcony.

Discourage Break-ins



- Keep exterior building doors closed, even when you are there. Lock doors at night.
- When you leave during the day, lock all windows and doors. Screens don't keep out bears.
- Lock vehicles; don't leave windows open even a crack. Remove anything with an odor (food, drinks, trash, scented products).
- Never store food, beverages, pet food, coolers on porches/decks.

Don't Feed Bears



- Feeding bears or using food to encourage bears to approach you is always dangerous and often illegal.
- Don't put out food to attract birds or small wildlife. You will attract bears, skunks and other critters.
- Throw food scraps into the trash, not "the woods." Even "harmless" scraps like apple cores teach bears to associate people with food.

Keep a Lookout During Cookouts



- Keep food and coolers within arm's reach; never leave unattended, even for a few minutes.
- Clean picnic tables after every meal. Remove all condiments and food.
- Store grill utensils inside and clean grill after every use.
- Never burn food scraps or trash in your fire ring or grill.

If You Encounter a Bear



- If a bear comes near your place, scare it away by making noise from a safe distance: yell, clap hands, bang pots together, use an air horn.
- Never try to get closer for a photo.
- Don't corner a bear; give it an escape route. Alert your host.

Outdoor Safety



- Hike in groups and stay together, especially kids.
- If you see a bear, watch quietly from a safe distance (at least 50 yards or 10 car lengths for black bears; 100 yards for grizzlies). Never approach.
- Never run from a bear. Carry bear spray (if permitted) and know how to use it. Learn more at BearWise.org.
- Be aware that bears are good swimmers and may enjoy the water, even with people around.

Traveling with Dogs?



- Keep dogs on non-retractable leashes at all times, or leave them at home. Don't force a bear to defend itself.
- Don't let dogs bark at, harass, chase or corner a bear.
- Keep pet food in your room/cabin. Feed dogs inside, if possible. Never leave food/water bowls outside.
- If your dog gets into an encounter with a bear, don't try to rescue it. You will get injured. Use bear spray; it works from 30 feet away.

Ask your host if bears have been active in the area. Follow any recommended special precautions and local regulations.

Black bear is a species; common colors include black, brown and cinnamon.

