

All trails within TOLRA are in 'bear country' Most bears are wary of humans and will generally avoid you. It is important to know how to avoid encounters with both black & grizzly bears and how to handle when they occur.

Prevent habituation Bears that eat garbage or food from hikers & campers start to associate people with food. When bears become 'food conditioned' this way, they may start to approach campers or hikers and can behave aggressively with negative results for the bear and people.

Best Practices in Bear Country

Hiking

Always carry bear spray in an easy-to-access location, such as a holster. **Know how to use it** and at what range.

Choose routes with good visibility where possible. Hike in groups - avoid hiking alone.

Make noise, especially in thick brush, berry patches or near running water. Loud talking or singing is better than using bells.

Stay alert. Keep an eye out for bears and give them plenty of room. Look for recent bear signs such as tracks, scat, fresh diggings or tree scratches.

Pay attention to **wind direction**. If you are travelling into the wind, a bear may not be able to smell you.

DO NOT approach a bear for a closer look or better photo. Use binoculars or a telephoto lens.

Camping

Keep bear spray handy, not tucked away in a backpack. Choose a campsite well away from signs of recent bear activity and berry patches.

Keep your camp clean. Do not leave food or garbage sitting out. Do not cook greasy, smelly foods like bacon and fish. Cook well away from your campsite, downwind if possible.

Store food in odor proof containers in the Bear-proof Storage caches.

Garbage should also be stored in odour-proof containers in the Food Cache – then packed out.

Where bear-proof storage containers are not available, hang food and attractants 4 metres (13 feet) off the ground between trees.

What to do in a Bear Encounter

- If you see a bear, stop where you are and **stay calm. Never run away.** Observe the bear's behaviour to decide on your next move.
- Check you can get to your Bear Spray quickly.
- If the bear has not noticed you, leave the area quietly, keeping an eye on it.
- If the bear has noticed you but is not reacting to your presence, speak softly and back away slowly. Gather your group & **Always give the bear an exit route.**
- While backing away, do not make eye contact, but keep the bear in sight. Keep speaking softly, take your bear spray out and be prepared to use it.
- If the bear becomes agitated, makes noises, or seems aggressive, continue backing away slowly and talking softly. Give it space! **Do not run away.**
- If the bear is steadily approaching you, try to get out of its way, preferably onto higher ground. If the bear still continues to approach, yell at it. If it gets within **spraying range (9 metres/30 ft)**, discharge your bear spray.
- If the bear charges, stand your ground and discharge your bear spray when it is within spraying range.
- If the bear knocks you down, roll onto your stomach and lie still. Protect the back of your head. Spread your feet slightly, so it cannot roll you over.
- If the bear continues to attack, or if it appears to be predatory, fight it off with everything at hand. Focus on the bear's eyes and nose.