



COWICHAN TRIBES

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Be smart. Be safe. Be bear aware

In the event you do come across a bear it is important to understand a bit about bear behaviour. Learn about the recommended response people should take; this is dependant on the type of interaction you have with the bear.

Avoid Bear Encounters

- Do not approach or feed bears, this could elicit an unsafe response that could lead to human injury and/or the destruction of the bear.
- Avoid surprise encounters, make lots of noise.
- Watch for fresh evidence of bear activity e.g. tracks, scat, diggings, or overturned rocks and logs.
- Travel in groups.
- Walk your dog on leash.
- Leave the area if you see a bear or see or smell a dead animal
- Respect all trail closures and information signs. They are there for your safety.
- Remove potential attractants from your property such as garbage, pet food, bird feeders, and berry bushes and fruit trees.

Handling an ATTACK! You may increase your chance of survival by following these guidelines. In general, there are two (2) kinds of attacks:

1. Defensive Attack

The bear is protecting a carcass, protecting its young and/or is surprised by your presence. It attacks because you are perceived as a threat. Remember bears will often bluff charge (when the animal closes distance but stops short of making contact).

- Be non-threatening – don't run or yell. Stay calm and back away slowly.
- Use your bear spray.
- Play dead if the bear makes contact with you. Drop to the ground face down, interlace your fingers over the back of your neck and spread your legs to make it more difficult for the bear to turn you over. By playing dead the bear will likely lose interest in you and leave.
 - Wait 2 minutes for the attack to be over
 - Fight back if the attack continues, it may mean the attack has shifted from defensive to non-defensive (i.e. predatory)

2. Non- defensive Attack

The bear is aware of your presence, has time to leave but continues closing distance on you – even after you have tried to retreat. This behaviour could be considered curious, indifferent or predatory.

- Use your bear spray. DO NOT play dead or fight back.
- Intimidate the bear: shout; hit it with a branch or rock, do whatever it takes to let the bear know you are not easy prey.