Ontario Provincial Police | Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

FACT SHEET

Bear Encounters — Who Do I Call?

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is working collaboratively with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and local police services to protect public safety and educate communities across Ontario about black bear behaviour.

Black bears that come into a populated area aren't always a threat to public safety. This fact sheet explains who to contact about encounters with black bears.

Emergency Situations

Call 911 if a black bear poses an immediate threat to personal safety by exhibiting threatening or aggressive behaviour, such as:

- Entering a school yard when school is in session
- Stalking people and is lingering at the site
- Entering or trying to enter a residence
- Wandering into a public gathering
- Killing livestock/pets and is lingering at the site.

Police are the first responder for any emergency situation. At the request of police, during daylight hours the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry will respond to emergency situations to assist.

Non-Emergency Encounters

Call the toll-free Bear Wise reporting line at 1-866-514-2327 (TTY 705-945-7641) if a black bear is:

- Roaming around, checking garbage cans
- Breaking into a shed where garbage or food is stored
- In a tree
- Pulling down a bird feeder or knocking over a barbecue
- Moving through a backyard or field but is not lingering.

This line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week from April 1 until Nov. 30. Trained staff can provide advice about black bear behaviour, how to avoid human-bear conflicts, and how to remove attractants from property.

Reducing the Chances of an Encounter

Even if they're not causing a threat to public safety, black bears should be discouraged from staying in populated areas.

People can take steps on their property and in their neighbourhood to avoid attracting black bears into populated areas. Visit ontario.ca/bearwise for tips and to learn about bears.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry would like to thank the many people who are already eliminating attractants. It takes only one property where attractants are not managed carefully to draw bears to a neighbourhood. Everyone must work together to keep black bears in the wild where they belong.

The Bear Wise program provides advice to municipalities, the public, and other stakeholders about what they can do to keep black bears away from urban and semi-urban areas and how to manage problem bears.

Media Calls only: Todd Lane, Minister's Office, 416-314-1100
Media Desk, Communications Services Branch, 416-314-2106
Sgt. Peter Leon, Ontario Provincial Police, 705-329-6878

ontario.ca/natural-resources-news
Disponible en français