

Human Response to Bears

DEFENSE MECHANISMS: A Bear Attack is Imminent

FIREARMS

In all Bear situations if the bear closes to within Five Metres (15 feet) you should dispatch the bear with your Defence System. The Bear is charging at you – prepare for rapid fire – make the first shot count and be prepared to follow-up with a second or third shot if you can.

IF: You cannot shoot the bear without jeopardizing the life of another Ranger you **MUST NOT** take the shot. Take immediate measures to ensure a safe line of fire – Bark at the Rangers around you to get out of the way and proceed to kill the bear.

BEAR MACE

If Bear mace is being used wait until the bear is at least Two Metres (6 feet). Aim for the Eyes and Mouth. If possible wait until the bear breathes in. Remember that you only have a few shots available in the canister – make each blast of mace count for maximum effectiveness. If the bear is mauling someone already try not to spray the person if you can help it. However the lesser of two evils is the mace in comparison to the Bear mauling. Active ingredient in Bear mace is 1-2% Capsicum and does have a shelf life.

Capsicum causes massive mucus build-up in the lungs and makes breathing extremely difficult. Mace effectively blinds the target as well and is extremely painful. Bear Mace is much more powerful than mace designed for humans and can kill people with breathing ailments. Bear Mace is not to be taken lightly and must be carried with deep respect for safety.

Most Bear mace canisters will only last 4 to 6 seconds – so use it wisely. Maximum Range is 30 feet (10 metres) but is dispersed significantly. Best use is at extreme close Range.

NO DEFENCE MECHANISM IS AVAILABLE:

Climb a Tree if possible – go as far up the tree as you safely can.

If Bear tries to climb the tree after you be careful how you kick at it. Caulk Boots assist as a weapon in this circumstance

If no tree is available prepare to fight the bear off hand to hand

Use Knives, makeshift clubs, poles – anything you can find to keep the bear off of you. Aim for the face and throat.

The nose is a sensitive fleshy area on the bear's face. In addition blinding the animal may break off its attack.

BEHAVIOUR OBSERVATION AND YOUR RESPONSE Attack is not Imminent – what you do AND HOW YOU BEHAVE at this point could instigate one - to try and avoid contact

1. Defensive / Aggressive:

- a. Have your Defence Mechanism Ready;
- b. Assume a subordinate posture – you are trying to convince the bear you pose no urgent threat to them;
- c. Try not to make direct eye to eye contact but never lose eye contact (ie: maintain peripheral contact);
- d. Slowly back off and put on some distance
- e. If the bear starts to follow you once you have started to move away the Bear is displaying signs of predatorial behaviour.

2. Cub Defence Aggression

- a. Have your Defence Mechanism Ready;
- b. Treat the same as Defensive / Aggressive behaviour;
- c. Much more likely to make contact;
- d. If you are 100% sure that this is a grizzly sow with cubs the risk of contact has just gone up substantially. If she attacks you might try playing dead – this method has saved lives but be prepared for a severe mauling. The Sow will hopefully run off after her cubs shortly after making direct contact with you. If the cubs are two – three year olds they may assist the Sow in the attack. An extremely dangerous situation to be in – not many people survive this type of attack turns to predatory and the victim usually gets eaten. In addition if this is a Black Bear sow I would personally fight for my life until I could no longer maintain consciousness.

3. Predatory Aggression

- a. Have your Defence Mechanism Ready;
- b. You must to convince the Bear that you are too much of a risk to the bear's health to bother attacking for food. The Bear wants to avoid injury but he is sizing you up to determine if the risk is too great or if you're an easy meal;
- c. Look as BIG and as MEAN as you can. BE VIOLENT - Throw rocks, beat pans, blow whistles, be as loud as you can. Try to get elevation on the bear. Stand on stumps, logs, large rocks. Do not trip or fall over;
- d. Stand side to side so the bear can see all in your party;

4. Home Range Aggression (Bears to People)

- a. Have your Defence Mechanism Ready;
 - b. Assume a subordinate posture – you are trying to convince the bear you pose no urgent threat to them;
 - c. Try not to make direct eye to eye contact but never lose eye contact (ie: maintain peripheral contact);
 - d. Slowly back off and put on some distance
 - e. If the bear starts to follow you once you have started to move away the Bear has now started into predatorial behaviour.
 - f. **Hunters & Carcass Defence** - Bears (especially grizzlies) are renowned for attacking hunters shortly after they have shot some game.
- Initially the bear is predatorial after hearing the gunshot and then tracking down the location of the kill. Some Grizzlies have become accustomed to this behaviour because of gutt piles associated with most hunting activities. If the hunters are still there by the time the bear arrives there may be some serious trouble.
 - Once the bear finds the kill the bear switches to carcass defence (Home Range Aggression). The hunter's moose's carcass now belongs to the bear and it will likely attack anything near it. This is a very dangerous situation for hunters to be in. The hunters are now in between the bear and 'his' food. When in grizzly territory always have an armed buddy on point watching for an approaching bear while you dress and prepare the package for transport.
 - At this time the hunter(s) is between the bear and the carcass. Likelihood of contact is now extremely high. Always have a buddy on point while dressing the animal in bear country (especially areas with high grizzly populations).