

Montana Ag Safety Program



Bear Safety

- Use appropriate hazing and deterrent techniques. Hazing should only be utilized when bears are in the immediate vicinity (200 yards or less) and not feeding and/or aggressive. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service recommends:
 - Non-projectile auditory deterrents: yelling, clapping, air horns, sirens
 - Visual deterrents: spotlights or flashing lights
 - Vehicle Threat Pressure using a hard sided vehicle
 - Dogs or other livestock guardian animals such as donkeys
 - Water: high-pressure long-range stream such as from a fire hose
 - Stones or marbles: projectiles should be no larger than a golf ball and can be thrown or sent out of a slingshot
 - Paintballs/rubber balls
 - Noise-making projectiles
- Avoid bears by all means possible. If you encounter a bear:
 - Never approach a bear, even if the bear(s) appears calm.
 - Be alert and learn to recognize and watch for signs of bears in the area.
 - Common signs includes: tracks, scat, claw and teeth marks on trees, hair rubs on trees/fences/posts, stripped bark, caches, diggings, overturned rocks, torn apart logs/stumps, and day beds.
 - Bears will develop their own travel paths and will use berry patches or other preferred habitats on a regular basis.
 - Be aware that grizzly bears can aggressively defend carcasses. Know the difference between a defensive attack and a predatory attack.
 - Carry bear spray and know how to use it:
 - Do not run from a bear.
 - Bear spray may be ineffective in some situations. Employ other means when prudent.
 - If a bear makes physical contact with you: Drop to the ground, lie face down, assume cannonball position; protect the neck/head with hands and playdead.
- Report all encounters to local authorities including local law enforcement and area bear specialists.
- Use caution in brushy areas such as shelterbelts and areas along creeks.
- Remove spilled grain around bin sites. Utilize a tarp under augers/conveyors for thorough and quick clean-up.
- Dispose discard grain and feed through proper sanitation services, burning, or dumping away from people, buildings, and livestock.
- Dispose of carcasses and afterbirth through proper sanitation services or in a boneyard or compost pile surrounded by electric fence
- Secure domestic animals susceptible to depredation with an electric fence, when possible
- Place feeders, mineral/salt in open areas, away from brush and water
- Remove attractants near buildings, when possible – this includes items like dog food and garbage.
- Multi-wire electric fence can deter bears from entering susceptible areas such as calving/lambing pens, corrals, chicken coops, beeyards, orchards, waste sites, grain bins, etc.
- Utilize bear resistant storage means, when possible.