

## What to Do If You Meet a Bear



**Ursus americanus**

Black bears are common in the Northern Alberta wilderness. Grizzly bears have not been seen in our map areas. Bears and other wild animals here are unaccustomed to humans and normally avoid us if they can, or run from us on sight. Being sensible animals, most bears will notice the orienteering activity and keep their distance.

While bears rarely attack humans, it can happen. If you surprise a bear while orienteering, both of you will likely feel threatened. Your behaviour could determine the outcome.

### DON'Ts:

1. Don't move toward the bear.
2. Don't panic; don't show fear by screaming.
3. Don't make sudden movements which the bear may see as a threat.
4. Don't make eye contact.
5. Don't turn and run. Bears run faster than you and like to chase things.
6. Don't assume a bear that stands up or approaches you is attacking. Bears stand erect to assess you, and may charge at you then retreat. Don't panic.
7. Don't use your whistle to scare the bear – it won't, and it may attract him.

### DO's

1. If the bear hasn't seen you, quietly leave the area.
2. If the bear sees you, stop. Behave calmly.
3. Raise your arms so you look bigger, then back away slowly.
4. Speak in a level voice as you move, to show you are not a threat and not prey.
5. Keeping the bear in view, back away till out of sight, then leave the area or take a wide detour.
6. If attacked, fight back. Use whatever weapons you can e.g. a rock or branch.

If you are really worried about bears, you could carry bear spray (pepper spray) which may discourage an attacking bear so you can escape.

**The Bottom Line: Driving your car to the competition is much riskier.**