

HAZARD ALERT

Beware of bears and be prepared

British Columbia has more black and grizzly bears than any other province, territory, or state in North America. From 1997 to 1998, the Workers' Compensation Board of B.C. accepted eight disability and fatality claims resulting from workers' encounters with bears. Most injuries occurred when workers tried to run away from bears or attempted to avoid physical contact with them.

When workers' activities take place where bears may be encountered, employers are required to protect the workers' safety by including bear awareness in their existing health and safety program. The bear awareness element of a health and safety program should include information, written work procedures, and education and training.

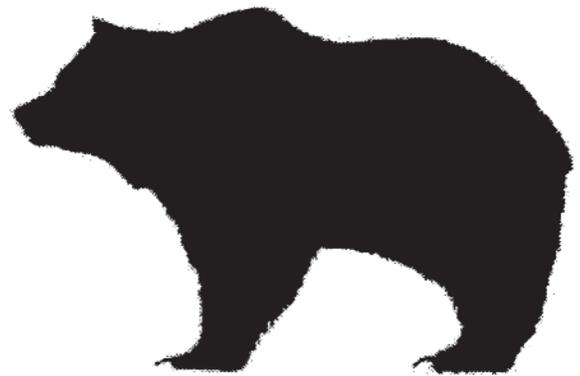
Some workers whose activities put them at risk include, treeplanters, drillers, prospectors, ranchers, loggers, members of forestry layout and survey crews, and land surveyors. Managers must ensure that workers understand and follow procedures for bear avoidance and encounter.

Safe work practices:

Workers who may encounter bears in the course of their work must receive education and training on how to work safely around bears. The following topics on bears and bear awareness should be included in an organization's health and safety program.

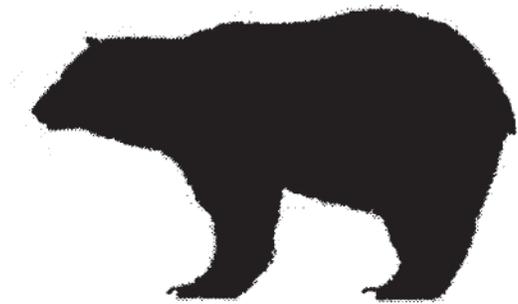
- Information about bears
- Ways to avoid bears
- Means to control bears
- Ways to survive bear attacks
- Camp safety

For more information on bears and safety around bears, please contact your local WCB safety officers. Visit www.worksafebc.com/corporate/contacts/default.asp for the location of WCB offices and their phone numbers.



Grizzly Bear

Grizzly bears are found in most areas of the province, except for Vancouver Island, the Queen Charlotte Islands, some parts of South Central Interior B.C., and the Lower Mainland. They prefer coastal estuaries, alpine meadows, mountainous areas, floodplains, skunk cabbage swamps, and the lower slopes of coastal valleys.



Black Bear

Black bears are found throughout the province. They prefer mountainous forests, bush lands, and the muskeg swamps in northeastern B.C.