BEAR SPRAY SAFETY

Blue Collar Silviculture Ltd.

Bear Spray

- Most bear attacks happen when a bear is surprised at close range. Make loud noises periodically, like shouts or singing, to let the bear know you are there. Your best tool to avoid a surprise bear encounter is your voice.
- Practice is important for you to be able to use bear spray quick and effectively.
- Bear spray is the most effective way of deterring an approaching grizzly or black bear at close range.
- Check the can of bear spray:
  - Make sure it is actual bear spray, and not pepper spray designed to be used on humans.
  - For expiry date (most cans last for about 2-3 years)
  - For effective spray distance. Most brands can spray up to 4 - 10m.
- If your can is expired, or you notice any deficiencies upon inspection (overly dirty, missing safety clip), report to your supervisor.

Bear Spray Storage and Transport

- Bear spray will be provided on some contracts, but you may also choose to bring your own. It is important to understand how to use, store, and transport it safely.
- DO NOT transport bear spray in the cab or baggage compartment of **helicopter**. Bear spray must be transported in the external basket, inside your day bag.
- DO NOT transport bear spray inside the cab of the **truck/suburban**. Bear spray must be transported in the box of the pick-up.
- Store bear spray in a dry place away from pets and children. Store between 0^{o} and 50^{o} Celsius. DO NOT puncture or incinerate the cannister. If cannister is empty, press the valve to release all pressure, then dispose at appropriate facility. Partially filled cannisters can be disposed of at certain facilities as well. Ask your supervisor for assistance. DO NOT leave bear spray lying around camp unattended. You are responsible for your bear spray at all times.

Bear Spray Use

- It's important to keep bear spray accessible, so it is ready to use when you need it.
- It may not be necessary to keep bear spray in your planting bags at all times. Bear spray can get jostled around, dirty, and deploy accidentally when transported in planting bags. If carrying in planting bags, secure to the bags so it will not get unnecessarily wet or dirty.
- Keep bear spray on you when walking into the block, when working in a back pocket or finger, or when working alone (follow isolated worker policy and procedures).
- DO NOT spray yourself or your equipment.
- DO NOT spray anyone else.

Bear Spray Exposure

In the event someone is exposed to bear spray, a first aid attendant will be contacted.

- Eyes – irrigate with cool water for at least 15 minutes, or until relieved. Seek medical attention if irritation persists.
- Skin – Irrigate with cool water for at least 15 minutes. Wash with mild soap and water. Seek medical attention if irritation persists.
- Inhalation – Remove the patient from contaminated area immediately. Provide fresh air. Administer oxygen if breathing is difficult and follow first aid training. Seek immediate medical attention.
- Ingestion – DO NOT INDUCE VOMITING. If patient is conscious and not convulsing, rinse mouth with water. Ingest milk or water. Seek medical attention immediately. If unconscious, do not give anything by mouth and follow first aid training for rapid transit category patients.

Bear Spray Use Continued

Steps to using bear spray:

- DO NOT run, remain calm.
- Access the bear spray.
- Remove safety clip.
- Group together (if not alone), and back away slowly.
- Avoid eye contact and speak softly.

Most bear encounters end here, but if the bear continues to approach and gets in range, you may need to use the bear spray.

Blow your whistle 3 times to alert others in the area of the emergency situation.

Photo by: Heather Chartrand

How Close to Use Bear Spray

- Bear spray is most effective under 10m, depending on brand.
- A plot cord is 3.99m in length. Try laying one down on the ground to see what that looks like. ~2.5 plot cords is 10m in length.
- You should be comfortable with what 10m looks like, so if you end up in a situation where you need to use your bear spray, you know when to deploy it.

Photo by: Heather Chartrand

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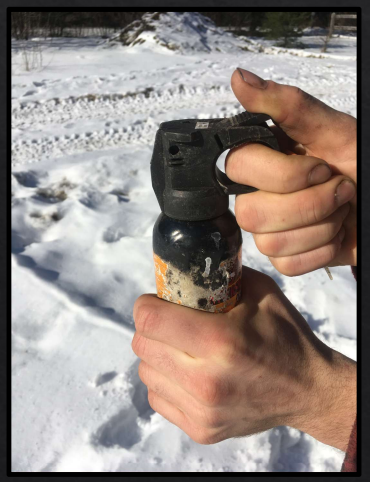
Cautions

- If there is a strong wind blowing in your face, be aware that some of the spray may blow back towards you.
- If you spray when the bear is too far away, it probably won’t have any effect on the bear, AND you will have wasted your bear spray.
- Improper care and transport can result in unnecessary deployment of bear spray.
- The safety clip should never be removed, unless the bear spray is being used.

How to Hold Bear Spray

- Hold the bear spray with 2 hands; one on the cylinder and 1 on the trigger. Deploy bear spray in 2 second bursts.
- A regular sized can of bear spray contains 6-8 seconds of spray duration, and you may need to use it more than once.
- Keep your hands steady. Aim slightly downwards, just below the bears face, to prevent the bear spray from going over its head.



Photos by: Heather Chartrand

What to do Once You Spray the Bear

- The pepper in the spray will cause temporary loss of sight and may make it more difficult for the animal to breathe, this gives you some time to get out of a dangerous situation.
- Once the bear has stopped or turned to leave, that is your chance to retreat. Keep your bear spray ready in case you need it again.
- Find your crewboss and report what happened.

Please watch the video for further information about using Bear Spray. The link to this video can be found below the Bear Spray PowerPoint presentation.

It is important to know how to use bear spray but remember that it is a last line of defense. Understanding bear behaviors and following safe practices while in bear country, is the best way to avoid an encounter with a bear.