



## What To Do If You Meet A Black Bear

There are no definite rules about what to do if you meet a bear. In almost all cases, the bear will detect you first and will leave the area. Bear attacks are rare compared to the number of close encounters. However, if you do meet a bear before it has had time to leave an area, here are some suggestions:

**Remember:** Every situation is different with respect to the bear, the terrain, the people, and their activity.

- **Stay calm.** If you see a bear and it hasn't seen you, calmly leave the area. As you move away, talk aloud to let the bear discover your presence.
- **Stop.** Back away slowly while facing the bear. Avoid direct eye contact as bears may perceive this as a threat. Give the bear plenty of room to escape. Wild bears rarely attack people unless they feel threatened or provoked.
- **If on a trail, step off the trail on the downhill side and slowly leave the area.** Don't run or make any sudden movements. Running is likely to prompt the bear to give chase and you can't outrun a bear. Do not attempt climbing trees to escape black bears. This may stimulate the bear to follow and pull you out by the foot. Stand your ground.
- **Speak softly.** This may reassure the bear that no harm is meant to it. Try not to show fear.
- In contrast to grizzly bears, female black bears do not normally defend their cubs aggressively; but send them up trees. However, **use extra caution if you encounter a female black bear with cubs.** Move away from the cub; be on the lookout for other cubs.
- Bears use all their senses to try to identify what you are.  
**Remember:** Their eyesight is good and their sense of smell is acute. If a bear stands upright or moves closer, it may be trying to detect smells in the air. This isn't a sign of aggression. Once it identifies you, it may leave the area or try to intimidate you by charging to within a few feet before it withdraws.
- **Fight back** if a black bear attacks you. Black bears have been driven away when people have fought back with rocks, sticks, binoculars and even their bare hands.

