

Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Bear Spray Guidelines

2017

The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) strongly encourages all who live, work or recreate in bear habitat to carry bear spray in an easily accessible manner and to be familiar with how to use it. Carrying bear spray is not a substitute for adhering to proper bear avoidance safety techniques. Additional information on safety in bear country can be found on the IGBC website (www.igbconline.org).

These guidelines are offered in an effort to provide the public with important information about bear spray and recommendations on how to select an effective bear spray. The IGBC does not promote or endorse any particular commercial bear spray product.

- Purchase products that are clearly labeled for deterring attacks by bears. If in doubt, ask a salesperson specifically for **bear spray**.
- Only purchase bear spray that is registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA registration number is displayed on the front label of bear spray canisters.
- Use the EPA-registered bear spray in accordance with its label instructions.
- Given the unpredictable situations that may be encountered and the possible need to use bear spray multiple times during the course of one trip (e.g., wind, multiple bears, the hike out, etc.), be sure to carry an adequate amount of bear spray. Consider carrying two cans.

Bear spray is only effective when used as an airborne deterrent sprayed as a cloud at an aggressive animal. It should not be applied to people, tents, packs, other equipment or surrounding areas as a repellent. Bear spray should be used as a deterrent only in an aggressive or attacking confrontation with a bear. Never approach, interact with, or feed a bear.

Once the bear has retreated, leave the area as quickly as possible (***don't run***) or go to an immediate area of safety such as a vehicle, tree or building. Do not chase or pursue the animal.

Each person should carry a can of bear spray when working or recreating in bear habitat. Spray should be carried where it can be accessed quickly, such as in a hip or chest holster. In your tent, keep bear spray readily available next to your flashlight. You should also keep a can available in your cooking area. Be sure to check the expiration date on your can of bear spray.

No deterrent is 100% effective and the IGBC does not guarantee the effectiveness of any product; however, compared to all other methods (including firearms) bear spray has demonstrated the most success in fending off threatening and attacking bears and preventing injury to the person and animal involved. The IGBC recommends the use of bear spray ***in addition to*** following proper bear avoidance safety practices. Applying good bear safety techniques along with the appropriate use of bear spray will reduce human injuries caused by bears, reduce the number of grizzly bears killed in self-defense, and help promote the recovery and survival of grizzly bears.