



SAFETY ALERT & BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION

Bear Safety

AOM: 2025-03-17

Spring is just around the corner and that means bears will be coming out of hibernation. In preparation for another season working in bear country, review the following safety information.

Staying safe when working around bears:

- 1) **Preparation** – Include bear safety as a topic in safety meetings and conduct in-house training on bear interactions, which may include bear spray training and practice. You can acquire inert bear spray as a training tool and use a 5-gallon bucket pulled on a rope as a moving target to practice on.
- 2) **Bear Species** – Get to know your BC bear species, both black bears and grizzly bears. Each species has distinctive characteristics and behaviours. The more you know about them, the more likely you'll be able to avoid negative interactions.
- 3) **Types of Behaviours** – Most bears don't want anything to do with humans and try to avoid them. However, in some instances, bears may show defensive or predatory behaviours. Defensive behaviour can include bluff charging, swatting the ground or making huffing sounds. This may occur when bears are protecting cubs or there is a valuable food source nearby. A predatory bear is usually a black bear that has been exposed to humans and human food sources. These bears are less wary of people and in rare circumstances, may see people as a food source. Be aware of predatory behaviour which may include stalking, circling and using cover to get close.
- 4) **How to Protect Yourself** – The most effective way to protect yourself from a bear encounter is to not get into one in the first place. Tap into local knowledge and learn the location of high-risk bear areas. Pay attention to your environment and be cautious where vision, smell and hearing is limited or impaired. Working in areas with dense brush, around loud natural noises like a rushing stream or working in an area downwind of a bear should cause you to pause and evaluate your situation. In most cases, making noise and making yourself visible will alert bears of your presence and they will likely leave.
- 5) **Bear Defense** – Bear spray and firearms are common bear deterrents. Whatever protection device you use, make sure you transport it safely, practice with it regularly and have it ready and available to use quickly in an emergency. Most forestry workers use bear spray due to its light weight, small size and convenience. Here are some tips on using bear spray from [WildSafeBC](#):





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If you do encounter a predator, you may only have a few seconds to react. Remember the **S.P.R.A.Y.** acronym.

S – Stop

Stay CALM and DO NOT RUN. Assess the situation.

P – Prepare

Remove the bear spray from the holster with your dominant hand and grasp the base with your other hand. Observe the animal. If the animal does not appear interested in you, back away slowly, always facing the animal. If the animal approaches or follows – stop.

R – Remove the safety

With the bear spray in both hands, release the safety.

A – Build A Wall

If the predator charges you, build a wall of spray between you and the predator. Do this by pointing the bear spray to the ground a few meters in front of you, press on the trigger and bring the spray up in line with the predator's head.

Y – Yield

Take a step back to put distance between you and the cloud of spray and the predator.

Bear spray is a great tool, but it can knock you down as well as the bear. Pay attention to the wind direction and don't spray into the wind. [This webpage has some good first aid tips for anyone who has come into contact with bear spray.](#)

- 6) Reporting and Communication** – If you've had a negative encounter with a bear, share that info with other companies in the area. Report all wildlife conflicts to the BC Conservation Officer Service RAPP line at [1-877-952-7277](tel:1-877-952-7277).
- 7) Other Wildlife** – Bears aren't the only potential problem animals in the forest. Plan for any potential interactions with cougars, moose or insects that may cause issues or injury.

Resources

[Wildlife Awareness – BC Forest Safety Council](#)

[Bear Spray Video and Resources – WildSafeBC](#)



BCFSC Latest News & Resources

[New Course – Instructor Led Basic Incident Investigation](#) – The regular Basic Incident Investigation training is also available as a requested instructor-led virtual course which is convenient for companies with employees located around the province. It includes a combination of instructor-led virtual meetings and learning activities through BCFSC's online Learning Centre. The training is scheduled as two half-day sessions to provide flexibility for participants who are actively working.

[New First Aid Requirements came into effect November 1, 2024.](#) Make sure to update your company's First Aid Program. [For more information, check out BCFSC's website](#) which includes recorded webinars and resources.



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[March Forest Safety News](#) – read the latest issue of the FSN

[FIRS App](#) – The full version of the BCFSC FIRS App is now available to download from your App store. Use the FIRS App manage forms and documents for safety-related paperwork related to SAFE Companies and COR audit forms management.

BCFSC Training:

April 29 – May 2 | [Falling Supervisor – Nelson](#)

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

April 29 – May 2 | [Falling Supervisor – Prince George](#)

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

May 16 | [Basic Incident Investigation – Campbell River](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

May 22 - 23 | [Forest Supervisor – Due Diligence for Supervisors – Kamloops](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

May 27 – 30 | [Falling Supervisor – Campbell River](#)

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

June 4 - 5 | [Forest Supervisor – Due Diligence for Supervisors – Nelson](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

June 5 - 6 | [Forest Supervisor – Due Diligence for Supervisors – Campbell River](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

June 6 | [Basic Incident Investigation – Nelson](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

The 2025 training dates are now up on our website. Refer to the [Training section](#) for more information on upcoming classroom training and costs.

Worker Assessment and Training

Each forestry occupation requires different knowledge and skillsets to perform the job at hand. BCFSC worked with industry to develop competency-based standards, training, and assessment tools to help employers evaluate workers and complete on-the-job training.

Take a look at our [FREE online training and assessment forms](#) for Basic Forest Workers, Yarding, Mechanized Harvesting and Road Building.

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