**INTRODUCTION**

*Workers may encounter the following dangerous/poisonous animals in their working area: bears, cougars, snakes, moose, spiders, stinging insects (e.g. wasps, bees).*

*The consequences of approaching wildlife can be serious. You are responsible for your own safety as well as the safety of wildlife.*

**SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

* Whistle – Recommended

**WORKING NEAR WILDLIFE**

*There is always a potential for a wildlife encounter when working in the forest, especially in the spring.*

**TREAT ALL WILDLIFE WITH RESPECT AND CAUTION, ALWAYS AVOID**

Be aware of your surroundings and signs of wildlife (e.g. tracks, scat, damaged trees).

Avoid wildlife kill areas as bears may aggressively protect them.

Avoid mother moose with calf. Some savvy bush workers feel the moose is the most dangerous creature in the forest.

Report wildlife sightings and aggressive behavior to the Supervisory Staff.

**ENCOUNTER AVOIDANCE**

**INTRODUCTION**

*The first rule of wildlife safety is to avoid encounters. People can modify their behavior so they don’t attract wildlife to their worksites.*

Respect all wildlife – all are potentially dangerous.

Never approach or attempt to feed wildlife.

Put all garbage in approved garbage receptacles. If there are no receptacles, pack out what you pack in.

Never bury food or garbage.

* Pack out any leftover food.

**MAKE NOISE**

Many bear encounters occur because the bear did not know you were there. Make a little noise while you are walking or working and you could very well avoid an encounter.

Work in pairs if there is an indication of bears in the area.

Bear bells are recommended, but they may drive you and your co-worker crazy. Talking, singing or make other noises is a great alternative to let the bears know you are around.

* It is recommended that you carry a whistle as it can be used to help signal others in an emergency.

*Personal music players are not recommended. You just can’t hear what is going on around you.*

**BEAR IDENTIFICATION**

*There are two types of bears: black bears and grizzlies. In the event of an encounter, it is important to know which type of bear you are dealing with as it can affect the way in which you should respond.*

*Know how to tell the difference between a black bear and a grizzly bear. The information below describes the differences between the two types of bears.*

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| Black Bear |
| Although typically black, black bears can also be brown or even grayish. Colour is not a good indication of bear type | Black bears are typically smaller, but size is not a good indication. Mature black bears weigh from 220 to 440 lbs. but can get up to 600 lbs. |
| Black bears have a relatively straight back profile. | Black bears have a straight nose profile. |
| A black bear's claw prints are close to the foot pads. |  |

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| Grizzly Bear |
| Grizzly bears are typically brown but their colour can also vary. | Grizzly bears weigh from 330-1100 lbs. |
| Grizzly Bears have a hump on their back over their front shoulders. | Grizzly bears have a dished nose profile. |
| A grizzly bear's claw prints are far from the foot pads in the center of the print. |  |

**IDENTIFYING BEAR BEHAVIOR**

*Understanding a bear’s body language will help you better assess its intentions.*

**STANDING ON HIND LEGS**

* A bear rising on its hind legs may simply be trying to better assess the situation either visually or through smell. Standing tall is not necessarily a threatening gesture.

**CHARGING**

* There are two types of charges, a real charge and a false charge. A charging bear will frequently veer away if you stand your ground. Some bears will make multiple false charges with each one getting a little closer.
* Jaw Popping A threatened bear may make a popping or “woofing” noise with its jaw.

**PROFILE VIEW**

* A bear may turn sideways to better display its size. It is trying to show you it is too big for you to mess with.

**IDENTIFYING THE TYPE OF ENCOUNTER**

*There are several types of bear encounters:*

* Casual
* Defensive
* Predatory

*Understanding what kind you are having can help you decide the safest strategy to deal with the situation.*

**CASUAL ENCOUNTER**

* Casual encounters are when there is little or no threat of an attack. In these instances, the bear typically runs away.

**DEFENSIVE ENCOUNTER/ATTACK**

* When a mother is protecting her young.
* When a bear is protecting a food cache.
* When a bear is threatened by your presence in its territory.
* When a bear is surprised by your appearance.
* **Warning Signs**
* Animal carcass in area.
* Young bears seen in area.

**PREDATORY ENCOUNTER/ATTACK**

* When the bear perceives you as food.
	+ If a bear is stalking you, you are likely faced with a predatory attack. The bear is looking at you as a potential source of food.

**IMPORTANCE OF ATTACK IDENTIFICATION**

* As bear attacks go, a defensive attack is much more "preferable" than a predatory attack. With a defensive attack you need to convince the bear that you are not a threat and that you will leave peacefully. With a predatory attack you are definitely in a potentially dangerous situation.

**SURVIVAL STRATEGIES – BEARS**

1. Don't panic! Easier said than done, but a bear can be startled or provoked by quick movements.
2. Don't make eye contact, this can be seen as threatening to the bear. Instead, lower your gaze and slowly back away. Assess the bear's reaction and determine the type of bear and type of an encounter this might be.
3. Don’t run. In the short run, a bear can outrun a racehorse. A bear can reach speeds of 50-60 km/h and can run both uphill and downhill with ease.
4. Once the type of attack and the type of bear have been determined, you can decide on the best course of action.

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|  | **Explanation** | **Warning Signs** |
| **Black Bear** | You goal is to not be seen as a threat to the bear. 1. Shy away.
2. Do not run.
3. Move toward other nearby people.
4. Do not climb a tree. The black bear can follow you up a tree.
5. Drop your daypack or anything else that may distract the bear.
 | With black bears, playing dead is not a viable option. Sometimes a Black Bear will start chewing on its prey (you).1. Make noise.
2. Stand your ground.
3. Fight with your hand tools if you have to.
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| **Grizzly Bear** | Same as a black bear but, worse comes to worst, you can play dead. | Same as black bear or play dead. |
| **Climbing Trees** | Black bears can climb trees quite easily and grizzlies have a reach of about 4 metres. If sufficiently motivated, a grizzly can climb – or just push the tree over. |

**HOW TO PLAY DEAD**

* If you are physically attacked by a grizzly bear, play dead. If you are physically attacked by a black bear, DO NOT play dead.
* Lie on your side curled in a ball with legs drawn into your chest and your head buried in your knees.
* Clasp hands behind your neck.
* Keep legs tightly together.
* Stay in this position and try not to struggle.

**GRIZZLY BEAR REACTIONS TO PLAYING DEAD**

*If you play dead during a grizzly attack the bear will typically bat you around until it is satisfied that you are dead. The grizzly may throw some debris over the "carcass" and urinate on it. Grizzly bears typically wait until their prey is a little decomposed before they start eating.* **Wait until you are certain the bear has left before getting up and looking for help.**

**SURVIVAL STRATEGIES – COUGARS**

*Cougars are very different than bears. Your response to an encounter needs to be different.*

**Encounter Response**

Directly face the cougar and slowly back away. Maintain eye contact while you move away.

Always leave the cougar a path for retreat.

Cougars don’t bluff charge like bears. If a cougar charges get ready for impact.

Make yourself large. Raise and wave your arms above your head to make yourself look big. This might intimidate the cougar.

You could also throw rocks and yell at it. Aggression may scare the cougar away.

Arm yourself with a large stick, speak loudly and firmly. Convince the cougar that you are a threat, not prey.

Don't run away. Cougars are predators and running may trigger the cougar’s attack instinct.

Don’t play dead if attacked by a cougar.

If attacked, fight back.

**SURVIVAL STRATEGIES – MOOSE**

*The most dangerous time of the year to meet up with cow moose (female moose) is in the spring and early summer when they may very well have young calves.*

*Bull moose are generally most aggressive during the fall mating season when they may perceive you as a threat and potential competitor to the cow moose they are courting. In fact, bull moose have been known to take on passing locomotives!*

*Moose also have a natural hatred of all canines, as they are often prayed upon and harassed by coyotes or wolves.*

**ENCOUNTER RESPONSE**

Use common sense and never walk between a moose and its calf.

Be sure to keep your dog under control in order to avoid a moose confrontation.

Back off a bit and give it plenty of room. However you may surprise a moose while traveling through overgrown country or the moose may surprise you by suddenly tromping into your camp unexpectedly. In close quarters always back away slowly and calmly.

**ATTACK RESPONSE**

*Sometimes an agitated moose will charge directly toward you and then veer off at the last moment. This is an unmistakable signal that the moose is attempting to scare you off because it perceives you as a threat. Other signs of moose aggression include walking toward you, laying back its ears, stomping the ground, and swinging its head from side to side.*

Should a moose attack, you can usually make a run for it and be OK. The moose is does not consider you as food, it is merely attempting to drive you off and will generally stop running after a short distance.

If you find yourself in close quarters with a moose and cannot get away (perhaps thick brush impedes your progress or your were surprised), try to get behind a large tree and keep yourself opposite the moose. If you can, climb a tree but you must be able to get high enough so that the moose cannot reach you.

If a moose succeeds in attacking you, curl up into a fetal position and play dead. Do not attempt to fight back as this will only further enrage the animal. Generally the moose will stomp and kick at you. Protect your head, back, and neck as much as possible.

* Once the moose seems to have left the area, be very careful. Moose have been known to return in a short time in an attempt to get you again!

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| **The following items are not recommended but may be an option for some. Training is required before the use of any of these items. Certification and adherence to regulation may also be required.** |
| Whistle | Recommended |
| Bear Bangers | Optional |
| Bear Spray | Optional |
| Non restricted firearm | Optional |
| Deterrent Horn | Optional |