



Agenda Item 11B – April 15th, 2015

Guidelines for Trained Security Personnel to Scare a Bear

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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These Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) guidelines are meant to provide technical assistance to security personnel who have been trained by FWC and who choose to address human-bear conflicts by attempting to scare a black bear. Scaring a black bear can reinforce its natural fear of people and help keep it from lingering in neighborhoods and other areas where it is not welcome. Effectively scaring a bear also reinforces the person as the dominant in an encounter, so the bear learns to avoid people.

The black bear is protected by rule 68A-4.009 in the Florida Administrative Code. However, homeowners, landowners or lessees with landowner permission can legally scare a bear off of their property IF they follow the methods described in 'Scaring Bears by the Public'. The FWC offers Bear Response Training to personnel who are responsible for public safety or security for their organization. Methods covered in this training include all methods allowed for the public, as well as more advanced methods of shooting bean bag rounds, rubber buckshot, and pyrotechnic rounds. In order to use these advanced methods and comply with rule 68A-4.009, you must participate in the FWC Bear Response Training.

Following these guidelines and participation in the FWC Bear Response Training does not eliminate the possibility of a bear causing personal injury or death. Trained personnel should exercise extreme caution and attempt to scare a bear at your own risk.

Scaring a black bear can reinforce its natural fear of people and help keep it from lingering in neighborhoods and other areas where it is not welcome. Effectively scaring a bear also reinforces the person as the dominant in an encounter, so the bear learns to avoid people.

By choosing to scare a bear people are assuming the liability for any and all damages, costs or losses resulting from those activities explained in this document and further agree to save and hold the FWC and its employees and contractors harmless from any and all liability, costs or damage resulting from said activities.

Scaring a bear will NOT keep it from returning to an easily available food source.

Before attempting to scare a bear, secure all attractants, such as trash, pet food and bird feeders. Visit MyFWC.com/Bear for information and options on securing attractants. When the food source has been removed, a bear should have no reason to linger in the area.

If the bear continues to return, the FWC recommends trying to scare the bear. The FWC recommends using non-contact methods to scare the bear first. Non-contact methods rely primarily on people making loud noises (such as yelling, using an air horn or whistle), or motion-activated devices like visual and audio alarms or water sprinklers, which can deter bears without anyone being present. Often, non-contact methods are enough to deter bears that have not yet become accustomed to people, and these actions are safer to use than contact methods.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR SECURITY PERSONNEL TO SCARE A BLACK BEAR:

BEFORE attempting to scare a bear, consider whether the bear is a good candidate for scaring. A bear that comes into someone's yard and is able to escape using a safe and clear path away from people and roads is a good candidate for scaring.

- **DO NOT** attempt to scare a bear if it is:
 - Near a road or could run toward people or traffic,
 - Up a tree or running away,
 - A cub (this can result in injury to the cub or aggression from the mother), or
 - A female bear with cub (dependent young).
- **DO NOT** attempt to scare a bear and **CONTACT THE FWC** if the bear is:
 - Highly agitated, starving or wounded (these animals can be highly unpredictable).
 - Strongly associating people with food (one that is approaching people).

BEFORE YOU START TRYING TO SCARE A BEAR, MAKE SURE YOU:

- **DO NOT** proceed if the situation is unsafe for people or the bear (such as a crowd of bystanders or busy roads nearby).
- **DO** put yourself in a safe location, such as in or near your doorway or window, car, or other sturdy structure.
- **DO** clearly identify that the bear has a safe and visible escape route.

If you feel scaring the bear could be effective, but do not wish to scare the bear yourself, please contact the nearest FWC regional office for assistance:

Northwest - Panama City: 850-265-3676

North Central - Lake City: 386-758-0525

Northeast - Ocala: 352-732-1225

Southwest - Lakeland: 863-648-3200

South - West Palm Beach: 561-625-5122

IF YOU DECIDE TO USE A NON-CONTACT METHOD:

- **DO** Show your dominance by
 - Holding your ground at a safe distance.
 - Looking the bear in the eyes.
 - Raising your arms above your head to look larger.
- **DO** make loud noises (yell, whistle, air or car horn).

IF YOU DECIDE TO USE A CONTACT METHOD SUCH AS A PAINTBALL GUN, SLINGSHOT, OR SHOTGUN WITH LESS-THAN-LETHAL ROUNDS:

- **DO NOT** aim toward the bear's face, as this can result in permanent injury.
- **DO** aim for the shoulder or rear of the bear.
- **REMEMBER** paintballs, slingshots, and rubber buckshot are effective at 5 to 15 yards.
- **REMEMBER** bean bag rounds are effective at 10 to 30 yards.
- **STOP** as soon as the bear runs for cover, away, or climbs a tree.

IF YOU DECIDE TO USE A FIREARM WITH PYROTECHNIC ROUNDS:

- DO aim the projectile upward so it explodes in the air between you and the bear rather than behind the bear, as that could motivate a bear to run toward you.
- DO NOT aim so that the pyrotechnic round makes contact with the bear.
- USE CAUTION with pyrotechnic rounds in dry conditions as they can start fires.
- REMEMBER bore thunder/muzzle bang rounds can be used at 5 yards.
- REMEMBER screamer rounds are effective at 80 to 100 yards.
- REMEMBER scare cartridges are effective at 50 to 100 yards.
- STOP as soon as the bear runs for cover, away, or climbs a tree.

The methods described above and in the FWC Bear Response Training to scare bears use starter pistols to deploy pyrotechnics, paint ball guns, sling-shots, and shotguns using bean bag, rubber buckshot and pyrotechnic rounds. Most of the ammunition is available through state contract with Lawmen's and Shooters Supply (<http://www.lawmens.net>). The actual company who makes the ammunition is ALS Technologies (<http://www.alstechnologies.com/>). The starter pistol and long range pyrotechnic rounds are available through Reed Joseph (<http://www.reedjoseph.com>).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Anyone can defend themselves or another person from imminent threat of injury or death posed by any wildlife species. Using bear spray is an effective way to stop an attack by a black bear. The FWC recommends carrying bear spray if you live or recreate in or near bear habitat. Visit MyFWC.com/Bear for tips on using bear spray.