

Be Bear Aware

British Columbia (BC) is home to black bears, so rather than be surprised to see a bear at Camp Olave, learn how to keep your campsite bear safe, and how to behave if you encounter or see a bear on site.

Bear smart tidy

Bears like food and the smells of food, so at your campsite you need to:

- **keep food off the ground** to prevent it being walked in and carried into tents, huts or cabins
- discard all liquids into the campsite **liquid disposal pit**, and
- place a J-cloth over the screen to catch any food scraps
- replace the J-cloth after each meal, and
- pour boiling water into the pit after each use
- **burn off all food** from the BBQ grill, half barrel or roasting sticks, if used
- **store garbage inside garbage container (s)**
- **take all garbage to the campsite dumpster after each meal**
- **lock garbage cans inside the campsite pantry** when your campsite is left unattended
- **wash dishes immediately** after each meal
- keep all **food inside sealed bins**, stored inside the campsite pantry
- keep all **scented non-food items** (e.g., toothpastes, lip balms, deodorants, soaps, etc.) inside a sealed bin
- **never eat food inside a tent or a hut**
- **avoid sleeping in clothes worn when cooking**
- keep **clothing soiled by food**, outside tent or hut, and bag and store it in the pantry overnight, and
- **avoid using fragrant candle** wax or burning candles with scents; including citronella products

Bear spotting or encounter

Remain calm

Often a bear is just passing through the location. If there is nothing to attract the bear (i.e., garbage or easy food sources), the bear simply moves on.

Note: During hot weather, bears like to head to the beach to lick the ocean salt off the beach rocks.

Keep away from a bear and give it space

Never approach or crowd a bear. Give it plenty of space and a safe avenue of escape. Make sure you're not between a mother bear and her cub (s).

Put the camera away, a bear is not a photo opportunity

Put the camera away, and keep moving. Stay alert at all times, of your surroundings.

Back away slowly and do not stare at the bear

Never turn your back on a bear, and do not stop moving or start to run from it. Move slowly away.

Let a bear know it is not welcome

Make noise: blow an air horn, bang pots, and speak in a firm, loud, low voice and say "go away bear, you're not welcome here".

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Report a bear sighting to the on-site manager:

See a bear, hear a bear or recognize a bear has passed through your camp by what it touched or left (i.e., bear scat/pile of poop), report this to the on-site manager:

- phone 604-885-2163, or
- leave a note on the on-site manager's door, if you cannot locate them.

Hiking

When hiking the camp trails, watch for indicators of a bear being in the area. Check for:

- scat (i.e., poop) - check for freshness to determine when the bear was last present
- tracks - creates awareness that a bear passed by, and
- grazing signs - overturned logs and stumps torn apart should be checked for signs of freshness, and claw marks on trees. Always practice:
- hiking in a group (not alone)
- staying together as a group (i.e., place the slowest hiker of the group in the lead to set the group's pace, to keep the group together)
- talking or singing while hiking, to let the bear(s) know you are in the area (the sound from bear bells does not carry as far, nor are as distinct as the sound of human voices), and
- packing out whatever you packed in, including, any organics. Organics (e.g., apple core, orange peel, banana peel) eventually rot and decompose, but when tossed onto a popular trail they cannot decompose without first attracting a bear. Food found on trails frequented by humans, helps bears to associate the smell of humans with a food reward.

Learn more about bears

Check these websites:

[British Columbia Parks: Staying Safe in Bear Country](#)

[British Columbia Parks: Bears and cougars handout](#)