

BEAR SAFETY TIPS

Black bears by nature tend to be wary of people. Some residents may observe black bears using yards as part of their natural travel corridors. The mere presence of a black bear is not considered a problem. Black bear attacks are extremely rare. However, if you encounter a black bear in your neighborhood or outdoors while walking or hiking, follow these common-sense safety tips.

~Never feed or approach a bear!

~Remain calm. Avoid direct eye contact which may be perceived by a bear as a challenge.

Never run from a bear. Instead slowly back away.

~To scare the bear away, make loud noises by yelling, banging pots and pans or using an airhorn. Make yourself look as big as possible by waving your arms.

~If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect scents in the air. It is usually not a threatening behavior.

~If the bear does not leave, move to a secure area.

~Families who live in areas frequented by black bears should have a "Bear Plan" in place for children, with an escape route and planned use of whistles and air horns.

Remember: Never feed bears! It is illegal in New Jersey and its dangerous. Anyone feeding bears could face a penalty of up to \$1,000.- for each offense.

Report black bear damage or nuisance behavior to the DEP's 24-hour, toll-free hotline at 1-877-927-6337. For more information on line - www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw.