



Grizzly Bear Hazing Guidelines

Guidance for Livestock Owners, Homeowners and the General Public

Grizzly bears are listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). As such, harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or collecting grizzly bears is not permitted except for self-defense or in defense of others, as authorized by the grizzly bear 4(d) rule. *Harass* in the definition of “take” in the ESA means an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Grizzly bears can pose a threat to human safety and should be discouraged from using areas near homes and other human-occupied areas. Hazing discourages undesirable behavior in wildlife, and when properly conducted, does not create a likelihood of injury to grizzly bears to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns.

Individuals may use the methods listed below to deter grizzly bears away from the immediate vicinity (200 yards) of a human-occupied residence or potential conflict area, such as a barn, livestock corral, chicken coop, grain bin, or schoolyard. Once bears have moved beyond the immediate vicinity (200 yards), hazing is unlikely to be effective and should stop. All measures must be taken to ensure proper use of methods and that the bear is not injured or killed. If there is immediate danger of attack, individuals may legally take a grizzly bear in self-defense or in defense of others. This includes lethal removal of such grizzly bears. Any such taking must be reported to the US Fish & Wildlife Service within five days.

Any person who uses the techniques described in these guidelines must use discretion and act safely and responsibly in confronting nuisance grizzly bears. All actions taken must comply with applicable laws and regulations, including local, state and tribal laws.

Acceptable Hazing Techniques:

Non-Projectile Auditory Deterrents: Yelling, clapping, banging pots or other objects, air horns, vehicle horns, vehicle sirens, and P.A. systems (vehicle-based or hand-held) are often sufficient to move bears short distances, and should be employed before other methods are tried.

Visual Stimuli/Deterrents: Sometimes simple visual stimuli, such as spotlights or flashing lights can frighten a bear away. Use in combination with yelling so the bear associates the stimuli with human presence.

Vehicle Threat Pressure: Vehicles can be an effective hazing tool. By driving vehicles slowly towards bears (without hitting them), it can apply enough threat pressure to get bears to leave the immediate vicinity (200 yards). The effectiveness of vehicle pressure can be enhanced by using it in combination with auditory deterrents such as sirens or horns. Caution must be taken that no contact is made between the vehicle and the bear. As soon as the bear is clear of the immediate vicinity, pressure and noise should be discontinued.

Dogs: Dogs, such as Karelian Bear Dogs or trained guard dogs used on a leash can be an effective deterrence tool.

Water: The use of water in a large steady stream has proven effective at temporarily displacing some bears from human use areas. Hoses with a nozzle that gives a high pressure, long-range stream, such as a fire hose, can be an effective deterrence tool. As with all deterrence techniques, use of water for hazing should be accompanied by yelling so the bear associates the experience with human presence.

Stones or marbles: Can be either thrown or sent out of a slingshot. Wooden balls are also available for use with a sling shot. They should NOT be aimed at the face due to the danger of hitting an eye, but rather aimed at the rump of a bear. The maximum size of projectile should be the size of a golf ball. Range: 15-200+ ft.

Paintballs: Paintballs can also be used as a deterrent, avoiding injuring to the bear (when shot away from the face). An alternative to paintballs are rubber balls. Rubber balls are extremely cost effective and can be used repeatedly. Range: 30-150 ft. Note: Bears are attracted to paintball residue, therefore the area must be cleaned up after the use of paintballs.

Noise-making Projectiles: This category includes projectiles fired from a weapon that explode, creating a sudden loud noise, such as bangers and 12-gauge crackers. Range: 75-90 ft. (bangers); 180-250 ft. (cracker shells). The explosive noise of cracker shell or banger must occur between the shooter and the bear.

Guidelines for Use of Noise-Making Projectiles

The improper use of noise deterrents can cause injury to the individuals, bystanders, the bear, or nearby property. The following guidelines MUST be followed to prevent injuries:

- Always fire projectiles from a secure location (inside a hard-sided vehicle or from building).
- Always be aware of the line of fire and the backdrop. Ensure bear has an escape route away from people.
- Ensure the deterrent explodes between the operator and the bear – a noise deterrent that explodes behind the bear may drive him toward you or bystanders.
- All shooters must know the optimal range of their rounds as they can cause death at close distances.
- Noise deterrents should be fired into the air at a 45 degree angle above the ground.
- NEVER fire noise deterrents directly at or under a bear as penetration may occur sometimes resulting in internal explosion (particularly with 12 gauge crackers used at a close distance).
- Be aware of the potential for a ricochet.
- 12 gauge rounds should be used in un-choked barrels only - check the barrel of the gun after each shot to ensure there is no blockage that could result in a misfire.
- NEVER load 12 gauge crackers and lethal rounds into the same firearm. Deaths have resulted from confusion with regard to which round is chambered.
- Bear bangers discharged from a hand-held pen should be avoided as they are inaccurate and have been known to explode in people's hands.
- Cracker shells can start fires. Be aware of any fire related hazards when using explosive devices.

Unacceptable Deterrence Methods

- Screamers and Whistlers. Erratic flight pattern; higher fire risk in dry conditions.
- Rubber bullets and rubber batons. Higher risk of injury to the bear.
- Bean Bag and Aero Sock Rounds. Short range creates a human-safety threat.

Preventative Methods:

Livestock owners and homeowners should take measures to prevent or minimize losses from predation through good husbandry and strategic use of pro-active deterrent methods such as electric fence, guard animals, and human presence. More information is provided in the [Loss Prevention Toolkit](#) on the Montana Livestock Loss Board website: www.llb.mt.gov .

For more information on grizzly bear deterrence, please contact:

- USFWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Program at 406-243-4903
- USFWS Office of Law Enforcement at 406-247-7355