

TIPS TO PREVENT NUISANCE BEARS

From Mass Wildlife

Common solutions include many of the same actions that should be taken with bears at campgrounds and parks. Most importantly, people should remove or secure food sources that may attract or tempt bears

Take down bird feeders by April 1 (earlier if bears are active) and don't put them back up until December 1. Feeders may be hung from a wire at least 8 feet from the ground, but even if the feeders are inaccessible or "bear proofed", bears may be attracted by spilled seed. Birds do not need supplemental food in spring and summer and will not suffer from the lack of artificial feeding. Use other means, such as flower beds, dusting sites, bird baths, and nesting boxes to attract birds for your enjoyment.

If you are feeding pets outside, be sure that all pet food is consumed at a single feeding. Don't leave pet food or dirty food dishes outside overnight. Bears will be attracted to pet foods stored in trash cans or sheds. Be sure that bears cannot tip over and open food containers or break into sheds. Food odors may attract bears even if they can't gain access

Store all garbage in closed containers in a secure garage or inside location. Small bags of garbage may also be frozen and placed in the trash immediately before pickup. Do not leave trash cans unattended overnight. Wash and rinse cans regularly since bears may be attracted by odors. Double-bagging trash and placing ammonia, bleach, or camphor in the cans may reduce food odors but is not a guarantee that bears will avoid the trash.

Clean greasy barbecues and picnic grills with an ammonia-based cleanser after using them. Grills may be covered with aluminum foil prior to use to minimize soiling of the grill surface. Dispose of used foil in a secure container. Gas grills should be operated on high setting after cooking to burn off food residues. Do not leave food scraps, spilled grease, or dirty picnic utensils at your picnic area. Scrub and cleanse picnic tables and benches

Do not place meat scraps, fruit or vegetable remains, or sweet materials in your compost pile or bin. Bears (and other wildlife) may be attracted to these items.

Do not leave soiled diapers or diaper pails outside. Bears will be attracted to and feed upon the fruit and vegetable residue in the diapers

Be sure that your home is secured against wildlife, especially during warm weather. Do not leave home with the screen door locked and the inside door open. Bears can and will break through the screening to get at food items in your kitchen. In at least 1 instance in Massachusetts, bears gained entry by pushing an air conditioner into the house and entering through the hole. Turn off kitchen exhaust fans when not in use and clean grease from the grill and vent screen regularly

Be prepared **before** bears come to your residence or your local area. Once the animals have fed on human food, they will be more difficult to repel or frighten. Mild aggression by people is useful in asserting dominance over timid bears when they first appear. Do not approach a bear closely. If the bear huffs or blows, pops its jaws, or hits the ground, the animal is warning you that you are too close to it and you should back away. If the bear does not yield or flee, promptly move to your vehicle or a building. Notify [MassWildlife District offices](#) or Environmental Police of an aggressive or non-yielding bear should you encounter one.