

BEAR SPRAY POSITION PAPER

Bear Spray is specifically formulated to deter aggressive or attacking bears. Bear spray is specifically labeled for use against bears, and by law, must be registered with the Environmental Protection Agency and individual states. Bear spray, when properly used, has been found to be effective in deterring or ending most aggressive attacks. However, as with any deterrent method, there is no guarantee that it will be effective in all situations. Hikers and campers should not develop a false sense of security by carrying the spray, and should follow appropriate bear avoidance safety procedures. Bear spray, *when used properly*, causes temporary incapacitating discomfort which may provide a non-toxic, non-lethal deterrence of aggression by bears. Park staff will encourage the carrying of bear spray by the public, and when questioned by the public about what brand to purchase, park staff will refer to the following guidelines concerning bear spray, but not make specific brand recommendations. If the user plans to hike or travel in Waterton NP or other Canadian areas, note that only brands specifically labeled for use against bears can be transported legally across the international boundary.

Selection: Glacier National Park has adopted the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee guidelines for the selection and purchase of bear pepper spray. The guidelines are:

- Product should be clearly labeled “for deterring attacks by bears”
- Spray concentration of 1.0 to 2.0 % capsaicin and related capsaicinoids.
- Canister shows a net weight of at least 225 grams or 7.9 ounces.
- Should be derived from Oleoresin of Capsicum
- Spray released in a shotgun-cloud pattern, not a stream.
- Spray should shoot at least 25 feet
- Spray should last at least 6 seconds
- Registered and approved by the EPA

Use:

- In order to be effective pepper **must** be readily accessible, not in the pocket of a pack, but worn on the belt, shoulder, or chest straps.
- The spray should **only** be used to deter aggressive encounters with a bear, and **never** applied to people or equipment as a repellent.
- Remove the safety clip.
- Adjusting for wind drift if necessary, spray a short burst when the animal is 40-50 feet away in order to create a cloud the bear has to pass through.
- If the animal continues, aim the spray at the face of the bear.

Storage & Replacement:

- Check the expiration date and replace as necessary
- Avoid storing cans above 120° F (hot car interiors) or below 32° F if possible
- When transporting cans in a motor vehicle, insure they are secured in a closed container if in the passenger compartment to avoid accidental discharge.