

# safety for wildlife encounters

Instructor Guide

## Safety Talk Overview:

**What & Why?** Safety Talks are a method to refresh an employee’s knowledge and skills, maintain their interest in safety and illustrate the organization’s commitment to creating a healthy & safe work environment.

**Who & When?** Generally, these Safety Talk meetings are led by a supervisor, member of the JHSC, or Worker H&S Representative and should be mandatory for all crew members to attend. The content should be focused on a single topic. Safety Talks can be performed on a weekly basis or before the start of a new scope of work and should be about 15 minutes in duration.

go2HR developed this safety talk template for employers to customize and use for any topic in their organization. The Participant Handout should include information that you hope the worker will retain from the safety talk content and should be handed out during the safety talk for workers to reference later. Feel free to use it at your discretion.

**Wildlife Encounters Overview**

Working outdoors means sharing space with wildlife, which can be a memorable part of the your work experience but also presents risks to both people and animals. Staff play an important role in preventing incidents and ensuring safe, respectful coexistence. Common species you may encounter include bears (black and grizzly), deer, elk, coyotes, wolves, cougars, raccoons, skunks, and snakes—depending on the region.

**Safety Talk Outline (using the handout below):**

1. Introduce why it’s important to talk about wildlife encounters

2. Discuss techniques, both preventative and reactive to deal with wildlife encounters

3. Answer any questions that arise from staff or write them down for follow up

**Additional Resources:**

- [WorkSafeBC Wildlife Bulletin](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/bulletins/plan-prevent-encounters-bears-other-hazardous-wildlife?lang=en)

- [CCOHS Working With or Near Wildlife](https://www.ccohs.ca/zoonotic-diseases/working-with-wildlife)

- [BearWise Info](https://bearwise.org/bear-safety-tips/bear-encounters/)

## Topic Overview:

## 

## Safety Talk Facilitator Guidance

🞏 **Introduce** the topic and why it’s important

🞏 **Discuss** the associated hazards and likely incidents

🞏 **Tour** the work zone identifying hazardous areas

🞏 **Distribute** the Participant Handout

🞏 **Use** the info above to guide the discussion

🞏 **Document** the talk using the Safety Talk Record

🞏 **Explain** what controls are used to minimize the risks

🞏 **Remind** employees about applicable PPE usage

🞏 **Emphasize** the importance of safe work procedures

🞏 **Ask questions** to generate group discussion

🞏 **Answer any questions** or concerns they might have

🞏 **Set a good example** by working safely at all time

# safety for wildlife encounters

Safety Talk Record

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Discussion Leader:** | **Date:** |
| **Department:** | Time: |

### Attendees (Please print your name and sign beside it. If you are a contractor, also include your company name):

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### Near miss/incidents and investigations reviewed: ☐ None this month

### Any questions or concerns from workers?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action needed:** | **Person responsible:** | **Due date:** | **Completed date:** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Supervisor/Manager print name & sign:** | **Date:** |

### Reviewed by:

# TOPIC/TITLE

**WHY THIS MATTERS:**

Working outdoors means sharing space with wildlife, which can be a memorable part of the your work experience but also presents risks to both people and animals. Staff play an important role in preventing incidents and ensuring safe, respectful coexistence. Common species you may encounter include bears (black and grizzly), deer, elk, coyotes, wolves, cougars, raccoons, skunks, and snakes—depending on the region.

**KEY HAZARDS:**

 Surprising or provoking wildlife

 Animals attracted to food or garbage

 Defensive behavior from animals protecting young or territory

 Wildlife on roads, trails, or golf fairways causing collisions or injuries

**PREVENTION TECHNIQUES:**

For Staff:

 **Stay alert** and aware of surroundings, especially in early morning or evening.

 **Make noise** when walking in wooded or low-visibility areas.

 **Have a retreat zone** where you are protected from an attack (a vehicle, building, etc.).

 **Carry bear spray** where applicable—and know how to use it.

 **Inspect areas daily** for signs of wildlife (tracks, scat, disturbed garbage).

 **Keep a safe distance**—never approach or try to feed wildlife.

 **Educate guests** about not leaving food or garbage accessible.

For the Property:

 Secure **garbage and recycling bins**—wildlife-proof containers where possible.

 Post **signage** at trailheads or activity zones warning of recent sightings.

 Set up **emergency protocols** for serious wildlife encounters (who to call, when to close an area, etc.).

**IF YOU ENCOUNTER WILDLIFE:**

 Stay calm. Do not run.

 Back away slowly. Do not turn your back.

 Give the animal space and an escape route.

 Report the sighting to your supervisor or the designated wildlife officer on-site (i.e. radio, phone, in person, etc).

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:**   
 Prevention is key—wildlife are often drawn to food, garbage, and scent.

 Your calm, informed response can protect both people and animals.

 Always err on the side of caution. If in doubt, report it.

Let’s keep our staff, guests, and wildlife safe by being proactive, prepared, and respectful.

Participant Handout

### For more information on this topic or if you have questions, contact: