

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR AND BE BEAR SMART!

Congratulations on your new home!

In southwest Colorado we are fortunate to share the landscape with an abundance of wildlife, including elk, deer, coyotes, mountain lions... and bears. Living responsibly with bears requires taking proper measures to reduce the likelihood of human and bear conflicts.

Human and bear conflict occurs when bears find human food sources around residences and in neighborhoods. Sources include garbage, bird feeders, compost piles, pet food, livestock feed, chicken, fruit trees, etc. Bears obtain a huge caloric boost from these food sources and quickly become conditioned to receiving food rewards. In their attempts to obtain more they will break into homes, vehicles, garages, etc.

Once bears become problematic there is little that can be done to change their behavior. These types of problem bears will be euthanized by Colorado Parks and Wildlife personnel.

La Plata County and the city of Durango have enacted ordinances that specify how trash must be handled at residences:

La Plata County

Residents required to store trash safely in a structure, such as a garage, or in a bear-resistant trash container. Containers are to be placed curbside only on the morning of collection and no earlier than 5:30 a.m. Fines are \$200 for a first offense, \$300 for a second offense and \$500 for each additional offense. Many Homeowners' Associations have similar rules. If your HOA doesn't have rules relating to bears and trash, please talk to other members about developing guidelines. Colorado Parks and Wildlife officers and Bear Smart Durango are available to attend homeowners' meetings to talk about bear-proofing your property.

City of Durango

Residents are required to store trash safely in a structure, such as a garage, or in a bear-resistant trash container. Containers can be placed at the curbside only on the morning of pick-up, no earlier than 6 a.m. Fines are \$50 for a second offense and \$100 for each additional offense.

Several local waste haulers provide residential bear-resistant trash containers upon request at additional expense. Before ordering make sure that the container has been certified by the Living With Wildlife testing program as being bear-resistant. Also, check with your trash company regarding its guidelines for containers.

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Some simple suggestions for keeping our community safe for both people and bears include:

- Keep trash in a secure structure (such as a garage or shed) or use a bear-resistant trash container. Set out the morning of collection only.
- It is best to remove bird feeders from March thru November. At least make feeders inaccessible to bears and clean up any fallen seed.
- Remove fruit from the tree before it ripens. Remove fallen fruit so bears don't become accustomed to being in yards.
- Feed pets indoors and keep all domestic animal foods secured or in a bear-resistant container.
- Clean grease traps and burn off excess foods on your barbecue.
- Keep bear-accessible windows and doors tightly closed. Replace lever-style door handles with round knobs.
- Do not leave food in your vehicle and keep doors locked.
- For county residents, electric fencing is highly effective in protecting fruit trees, chickens, livestock, beehives, gardens and more.

Report Bear & Trash Incidents:

Central Dispatch
970-385-2900

Report Problematic Bears:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife
970-247-0855 or 911