

Bear Fencing of Industrial Camps



Properly installed fences and controlled gates have proven to be effective in deterring and preventing bears from entering camp locations. A bear proof electric fence system is the most effective means to keep bears out of camps. Companies who have installed and maintained electric fencing systems have demonstrated great success in the prevention of bears entering their camp facilities. Even in areas where bears were habituated to a camp location, once an appropriate fence system was installed, bears did not return.

Currently, camps without electric fences may try to warn workers by verbally telling them that there may be a bear in the area, or by putting up signs to this effect. This does not actually protect workers who encounter the bear before the signs go up, workers who have not seen the signs or those workers that have not heard or heeded the warnings. Electric fences protect workers and facilities 24/7, rain or shine, and ultimately reduce company costs and safety issues. Electric fencing provides a long term, highly visible safe area for workers to live and work in, while at the same time protecting bears by preventing them from being conditioned to people and ultimately destroyed.

There are numerous electric fence systems available, including those which run off solar energy, 110 volt or 12 volt power supplies. Most systems can be purchased reasonably inexpensively at local hardware stores. A low cost yet effective fence system can be something as simple as the placement of sturdy wood fence posts at corner locations to keep wire from sagging, then intermittent fibreglass or plastic push-in type risers in between using the flat braided electric wire.

The Ministry of Environment, Oil and Gas Commission and Workers Safe BC strongly urge companies who own or operate camps in the Peace Region to install bear proof electric fencing around their camp prior to April 15, and to keep it installed and maintained throughout the active bear season until November 30.

Conservation Officers may only be able to respond to bear conflicts at unfenced remote camps on a priority basis, meaning that every complaint may not be responded to. Camps should not expect Conservation Officers to provide a quick fix to bear problems, and are expected to take preventative measures to reduce or eliminate bear conflicts themselves, such as the installation of electric fencing.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR CAMPS

(These apply between April 15 and November 30)

Long-term Industrial Camps

(ie. processing plants, compressor sites, open lodging, logging camps or open pit mining operations).

All garbage containment areas, waste water containment, cooking facilities, incinerators, and accommodation facilities should be encompassed by a permanent 6-foot chain-link fence with 3 strands of barbed wire on top surrounded by a 3-4 strand electric fence c/w electric gate access. This does not apply to kitchen facilities located within permanently constructed administrative or maintenance buildings at worksite locations. When seeding soils in and around camps choice of vegetation type should not be a natural attractant to bears (i.e. oats and clover).

Seasonal Long-term Camps

(ie. drilling camps)

All garbage containment areas, waste water containment, cooking facilities, incinerators, and accommodation facilities should be encompassed by a 7 strand galvanized steel wire electrified fence or 6 foot chain link fence with 3 strands of barbed wire on top and surrounded by a 3-4 strand electric fence c/w electrified gate access. In addition the following conditions will apply to all the camps:

- Buffer areas on each side of the fences.
- Bear proof dumpsters on which all lids must be kept closed when not being loaded.
- Bear proof garbage containment with automatically closing lids (similar to those used in Federal Parks).
- Garbage containment receptacles (large bins) be housed off site (ideally at least 1 km from camp or facility).
- Bear proof incinerator ash containment on which all lids must be kept closed when not being loaded.
- Totally enclosed bear proof grey (grey/black) water containment.
- Bear proof secure grease storage containment on which lids must be kept closed when not being loaded and the exterior of which is to be maintained in clean condition.
- At worksites not enclosed by perimeter fence waste food and food container/wrappers are to be disposed of in garbage containers in secure buildings or bear proof containers with automatically closing lids at the plant site and transferred to bear proof garbage containment within the enclosed perimeter fence at least daily prior to night fall.
- There are to be no waste disposal or waste storage facilities in camp or work area parking lots that are not enclosed within the fenced area.
- Parking lots that are not encompassed by a fence, signs are to be posted in parking areas advising not to litter and to remove all waste from vehicles and dispose of it in waste containers within the enclosed camp area waste disposal containers.
- Problems with bears (in camps) to be reported to Conservation Officer Service immediately by calling **1-877-952-7277**.

Short-term Temporary Camps

Camps such as drilling or tree planting camps (less than 3 month duration)

- 3-4 strand electric fence c/w electrified gate access encompassing all garbage containment areas, waste water containment, cooking facilities, incinerators, and accommodation facilities.
- Bear proof garbage containment with secure lids that must be kept closed when not being loaded.

- Garbage containment receptacles (large bins) housed off site (ideally at least 1 km from camp or facility).
- Totally enclosed grey (grey/black) water containment.
- Bear proof secure grease storage containment on which lids must be kept closed when not being loaded and the exterior of which is to be maintained in clean condition.
- Bear proof incinerator ash containment on which all lids must be kept closed when not being loaded.
- Non-food attractants such as greases and oils that are kept at worksites are to be stored in bear proof storage such as hard walled buildings fuel sheds or strong boxes.
- At worksites not enclosed by perimeter fence waste food and food container/wrappers are to be disposed of in garbage containers in secure buildings or in bear proof containers at outdoor work sites and transferred to bear proof garbage containment within the enclosed perimeter fence daily prior to nightfall.

There should be no waste disposal or waste storage facilities in camp or work area parking lots/areas that are not enclosed within the fenced area.

Where parking lots/areas are not encompassed by a fence Bear Aware signs are to be posted in parking areas advising not to litter and to remove all waste from vehicles and dispose of it in waste containers within the enclosed camp area.

In addition to the above where accommodations are in soft walled structures the following best practises should be added:

- Camps to be located in open areas with good visibility away from bear food sources (berries).
- Keep sleeping areas away from cooking and eating areas.
- Cooking and eating areas to be cleaned after eating and food and waste to be placed or disposed of in appropriate containment.
- Garbage to be incinerated daily in a high temperature incinerator (burning barrels are not allowed) or removed from camp daily and disposed of in an approved offsite location (landfill or transfer site).
- All food to be stored indoors in bear proof containers or hard walled structure/trailer.
- Cooking and eating is to take place in a central area/structure.
- The camp is to be inspected daily for compliance with conditions.

Remote Camp Best Practises

A trained staff member (or team in larger camp settings) should be delegated as the key contact person for other staff. This person is responsible for documenting bear sightings and conflicts, implementing safety practices to reduce human-bear interactions, and contacting the Conservation Officer Service if necessary.

- All field staff should receive bear aware training courses.
- All odour and food attractants are minimized.
- Communication devices such as radios, cell or satellite phones must be available to staff.
- 3-4 strand electric fences surrounding the camp are recommended if there have been indications of bear presence, history of bear sightings in area.
- Buffer area on each side of the electric fence.
- The entire camp, including cooking, garbage and waste water sites are contained within the electric fence.
- Daily removal of garbage (prior to night fall).
- Daily disinfectant (lime) of garbage receptacles.
- Open greywater system (gray/black water) pumped out and odour control (liming).
- Central cooking and eating areas (no eating in tents).
- No meat pits or cooking over open fires.
- Other non-food attractants stored in a bear proof receptacle.
- Store all food in a bear proof receptacle.

FENCE AND BARRIER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR CAMPS

Good

- A 3 or 4 strand electric fence surrounding the Camp.
- Gate access.
- A buffer area on each side of the fence.
- The entire camp, including cooking, garbage and waste water are contained within fencing.

Better

- Permanent 6 foot chain link fence with 3 to 4 strand of barb wire on top.
- Gate access.
- A buffer area on each side of fence.
- The entire camp, including cooking, garbage and waste water are contained within fencing.

Best

- Permanent 6 foot chain link fence with 3 to 4 strand of barb wire on top.
- Electric Gate access.
- A 3 or 4 strand electric fence surrounding the chain link fence.
- A buffer area on each side of fence.
- The entire camp, including cooking, garbage and waste water are contained within fencing.

Electric Fencing for Long and Short-term Camps

