

# The “Golden Rules” for retrieving game meat out of bear country:

- ◆ When hunting in grizzly country, the golden rule is “get that elk or deer out of the area as quickly as possible.” The longer a carcass remains lying on the ground, hung up in hunting camp, or in the back of a truck, the more likely it will be discovered by a grizzly. The sooner elk and deer are taken home and butchered, the better.
- ◆ Some grizzly bears may move in the direction of gunshots because they have learned to associate hunting activities with a gut pile or animal carcass.
- ◆ Carcasses left for a period of time require special precautions. Carry a colored, lightweight tarp or space blanket. Put the guts on the tarp and drag them as far away from the carcass as possible. Then use the tarp to cover the carcass. This will reduce the scent trail from the gut pile to the carcass, and discourage birds and a bear’s attention to the carcass. Locate an observation point 200 yards (if possible) away from the carcass with a clear line of sight. **Before leaving**, walk to the observation point and memorize the site.
- ◆ When returning, approach the carcass carefully. Yell or whistle repeatedly. With binoculars study the scene from the observation point and scan the area for the carcass and any movement. If a grizzly bear is at the site and refuses to leave or the meat has been covered by a bear with debris and is not salvageable, report the incident to FWP. Hunters who have lost an animal to a grizzly may be eligible for another license.

- ◆ Do not attempt to frighten away or haze a grizzly that does not leave a carcass when it becomes aware of you.
- ◆ If you live in grizzly country, do not hang carcasses behind the house or in the garage for extended periods. Big game carcasses stored outside should be hung from a pulley attached to a stout 15-foot-long “meat pole” that is at least 25 feet off the ground. The lowest portion of the elk or deer should be swinging from the center of the pole and at least 10 feet off the ground. Grizzly and black bears have been known to climb trees and stand on objects in order to reach attractants.
- ◆ Bears are opportunists and change their behavior in order to take advantage of new food sources. So if you are hunting or living in grizzly country, always assume that grizzlies are in the area and make sure your camps, cabins and homes are bear proof, and that bear attractants are unavailable or contained.

**If you have questions pertaining to hunting or living in grizzly bear country, please call the nearest FWP bear management specialists listed below.**

*Mike Madel, Choteau, MT 406-466-5100*  
*Erik Wenum, Kalispell, MT 406-752-5501*  
*Tim Manley, Kalispell, MT 406-892-0802*  
*Kevin Frey, Bozeman, MT 406-994-3553*  
*James Jonkel, Missoula, MT 406-542-5508*



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**



## HOW TO HUNT SAFELY IN GRIZZLY COUNTRY

**“Think grizzly  
and be prepared”:**



Grizzlies can be found throughout Western Montana, not just the Rocky Mountain Front, Bob Marshall Wilderness and the Yellowstone Ecosystem (**see map**). In recent years grizzly bear populations have expanded and bears are re-colonizing historic ranges.



Be aware that the act of hunting puts you at risk of encountering grizzlies and that elk bugling, game calls and cover scents may attract bears.



If you hunt alone in grizzly country let someone know your detailed plans and have a way to periodically check in. Hunting partners should share details of their hunt plans and have a check in or communication system. If you feel uneasy hunting alone in grizzly country, hunt side-by-side with a partner.

# General Distribution of Bears in Montana



While hunting in grizzly country pay attention to fresh bear sign. Look for bear tracks, scat and concentrations of natural foods. Use caution when hunting areas that have evidence of bear activity or areas with scavenging birds such as magpies, ravens or crows.



Communicate with other hunters and let them know when grizzly bears have been seen and/or fresh sign has been observed.



Some bears may have learned to associate gunshots with the availability of a big game carcass or gut pile.



When in close proximity to people, most grizzly bears become aware of human presence and leave the area. If you encounter a bear, assess the situation, stay calm and do not run. Decide if the bear is aware of you and threatening or if it is fleeing and unaware. Keep the bear in sight and back away and leave the area. Occasionally bears will quarter toward you when leaving, so continue to be cautious.



When hunting in grizzly country, it is recommended that every hunter **carry bear pepper spray**. Keep the bear pepper spray within reach and be familiar with the firing mechanism. In sudden grizzly encounters pepper spray has proven to be a valuable deterrent tool. Grizzly bears sprayed in the face at very close range often stop attacking and are less likely to inflict serious injury.



Most grizzly attacks are prompted by inadvertently running into a female with young, surprising a bear at close range or being surprised by a bear that is fleeing another hunter. It is recommended that hunters mentally rehearse a worst-case scenario with grizzly bears. "If the mind has never been there before, the body does not know how to respond."



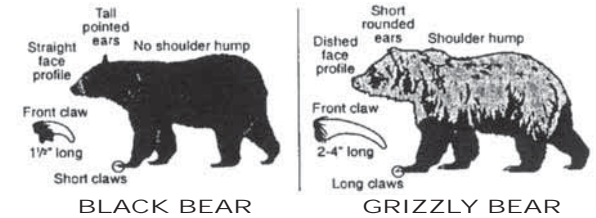
Use a weapon only if bear pepper spray is unavailable. Be aware that bears wounded with an arrow, knife or firearm may intensify the level of attack. If you have to kill a grizzly in self-defense, take careful aim and attempt to knock it down by hitting major bones in the front shoulders. Other shots to the vital area will kill the bear. Leave the scene immediately and report the incident to FWP.



As a last resort, if physically attacked, play dead. Lie face down, covering your neck and head with your hands and arms. If you have a backpack, leave it on to protect your back. Stay face down, never look at the bear and remain still until the bear is gone. Many people have survived bear attacked using this method.

## BEAR HUNTERS!

Look for a combination of characteristics



Color and size can be misleading

Black bear hunters in Montana will be required to pass a bear identification test in order to obtain a Montana black bear license. The identification program is intended to prevent mistaken identity killings of grizzly bears and help Montana maintain its black bear hunting season.

To take the test and training:

- on-line and become immediately certified, visit FWP's web site: [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov),
- request a mail-in test from FWP: 1420 E. 6th Ave., PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701, 406-444-2535,
- pick up a mail-in test at any FWP office or license agent.

**Please report all bear encounters and direct questions to one of the nearest FWP bear management specialist listed below:**

*Mike Madel, Choteau, MT 406-466-5100*  
*Erik Wenum, Kalispell, MT 406-752-5501*  
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