

Safety rules & recommendations



Safety rules for orienteering events

- 1. Strictly observe all event specific rules, cautions and advice.**
- 2. Carry a whistle. The emergency signal is three blasts.**
- 3. You must abandon your course if you hear a distress whistle and help participants in need.**
- 4. Always return to registration at the end of the event and sign out, even if you haven't finished the course!**

Safety recommendations while on a course

- Stop immediately if you become injured. Running ‘through the pain’ will only make your injury worse. Return to the start area and seek medical treatment for all injuries.
- Stop and relocate if uncertain of your location, (track back to the last point that you were certain about your location). Choose a safer route to return.
- **If you are lost or hurt stay still and blow the distress call (three whistle blasts) until help arrives.**
- In case of an overdue person, the organizers will initiate a search. You can help by following the directions of the organizers.
- Consider getting basic first aid training. You may be the first person to contact an injured orienteer.

Be aware of the possible risk factors:

- Tripping and falling - impact injuries
- Acute running injuries – strains, sprains and blisters
- Overuse injuries – although orienteers mostly run on soil rather than concrete, they may still be vulnerable to overuse injuries such as shin splints
- Skin and eye injuries – including abrasions, cuts, bruises, insect bites and sunburn.
- Extreme weather: hypothermia, heat stroke, dehydration
- Natural disasters: lightning, floods, wildfire
- Animal encounters
- Becoming lost: disorientation and exhaustion
- Losing alertness with your surrounding
- Other unforeseen situations

Things that you can control!

- **Choose the activity based on your ability:** newcomers should start with a beginners' course and progress gradually. Warm up thoroughly before orienteering.
- **To avoid tripping and falling,** look up from the map and familiarize yourself with the terrain before you start running. Adjust your running speed to terrain difficulty. Practice reading the map while running in terrain.
- **Wear appropriate clothes** to cover skin and consider wearing eye protection. Make sure your shoes are comfortable and give good support.
- **Adjust to weather conditions** by dressing suitably for the temperature and weather. Drink plenty of water. In case of overheating find shade and stop and rest; cool your body with wet clothes.
- **Exercise regularly** to keep yourself in adequate physical condition for your activity.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL DISORIENTED	
<p>Stop! Stay calm and think</p> 	<p>See if you can Track back to you last control or use safety bearing</p> 
<p>If you're lost STAY in one place somewhere visible</p> 	<p>Blow your whistle</p> 
DON'T PANIC HELP IS COMING !	

Things that you can't control but can be prepared for!



- **In case of sudden bad weather (stormy weather) return to start if it is safe to do so.**
- **In case of heavy rain stay above river beds, dry rock beds and steep hills to avoid flash floods or mud slides.**
- **In case of lightning** avoid high places and large open spaces. If a thunderstorm happens, it is best to head to shelter (e.g. your car or building). If that is not possible, find low ground, (e.g. find a depression, crouch down, body tucked in a ball. Avoid lone trees and rocky outcrops or ledges.

- **In a wildfire situation:** try to leave the area moving away from the fire. Choose a downhill route (but stay out of canyons) to avoid smoke and be aware of wind direction which may blow the fire and smoke towards you. If fire is coming near, try to find a wet marsh or lake and stay in the water. If no water body is nearby, go to an area clear of vegetation (or already burnt down), a ditch or depression, lie face down, and cover your body with dirt.



How to avoid and manage wildlife encounters:

<https://www.biosphereinstitute.org/>



Steve Baylin

Carry Bear Spray

- Bear spray has been proven to be effective at deterring attacks from black and grizzly bears.
- Bear spray may also be used to deter other animals such as elk, wolves, cougars and coyotes.
- Learn to use your bear spray and carry it with you when you recreate outdoors.
- Carry your bear spray in an easily accessible spot, preferably attached to your body by a holster or sling.
- Carry bear spray even in winter—ensure that it is easily accessible and remains warm to ensure its effectiveness.
- Check the expiry date on your bear spray. Replace after expiration or use.
- Take the time to read the directions on your bear spray, as different brands have different specifications.

For more information check out the 'How to properly use bear spray' video at wildsmart.ca

Pets

- Pets should be kept on leash and under your control everywhere in the Bow Valley except in designated dog off leash areas.
- It is not uncommon for off leash pets to come into conflict with wildlife.



Amar Athwal

Urban Elk and Deer

It is not uncommon to see elk and deer inside town limits. Although it may be hard to believe that these gentle-looking giants are dangerous, elk and deer are a major cause of human-wildlife conflict in the Bow Valley. Because they lack the sharp teeth of bears and cougars and are frequently seen calmly grazing on grass inside the town, visitors often believe that approaching or feeding elk and deer is harmless. However, they have been known to suddenly charge, injuring people and pets.

- Leave 30 meters (100 feet) of space between you and all elk.
- Keep your pets on leash.
- During the rutting season (September-October) never get between a male elk and a herd of female elk.
- Never approach female elk with young, especially during calving season (May-June).
- If you are charged by an elk or deer, position a large object (e.g. tree or car) between you and the animal.

How to Avoid and Manage Encounters

Avoid Encounters

- Do not approach or feed wildlife. This could lead to human injury and/or destruction of the animal.

Ways to avoid wildlife:

- make lots of noise to alert animals of your presence (e.g. talk loudly, sing or shout);
- travel in groups;
- walk pets on leash;
- be aware of your surroundings and recognize signs (tracks/scat) of wildlife;
- respect area warnings and closures;
- leave the area if you see or smell a dead animal; and
- carry bear spray and know how to use it.

Handling an Encounter

When handled calmly and appropriately, most wildlife encounters end without injury to humans or wildlife.

- **STOP—gather your group together!**
- **NEVER RUN!**
- If the animal is unaware of your presence, quietly go back the way you came.
- If the animal is aware of your presence, act non-threatening—talk calmly and back away slowly.
- Prepare to use your bear spray.

In a defensive encounter a bear may feel threatened by your presence if you:

1. are too close to the bear or its cubs;
 2. are too close to its food (e.g. a carcass, berry patch); or
 3. surprised the bear (it didn't hear you coming).
- Be non-threatening—stay calm and back away slowly.
 - **NEVER RUN!**
 - If the bear comes within range, use your bear spray!
 - If the bear makes contact, **play dead**.
 - If the attack continues it may have shifted to a non-defensive (e.g. predatory) attack. In this case fight back (see below).

For more information on handling encounters visit: wildsmart.ca

In a non-defensive approach by a bear, cougar, coyote or wolf—i.e. the animal has time to leave, but still approaches you.

- **NEVER RUN!**
- Intimidate the animal—act big and loud.
- If wildlife comes within range, use your bear spray!
- If the animal makes contact, **fight back**. Attack the eyes and nose.



Amar Athwal

Watch this VIDEO ABOUT HOW TO USE A BEAR SPARY!

CARRY BEAR SPRAY AND KNOW HOW TO USE IT

When recreating in bear country, your best strategy to avoid an encounter is to make lots of noise, stay in groups and be alert for signs of bears in the area. Diggings, scat, visible tracks and overturned logs and rocks are all signs that bears are around.

In most cases, bears will do their best to avoid people. Most encounters happen because bears are surprised by people, or because they are defending their cubs or a kill.

In the rare case of an aggressive confrontation, bear spray is your best defense. Recent reports show bear spray to be more effective than a bullet in diverting or stopping a charging bear.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BEAR SPRAY

- When choosing a bear spray, make sure that it has the following features:
- Minimum weight of 7.9 ounces
- Minimum spray range of 15 feet
- Expiry date clearly noted
- Be sure to read the manufacturer's instructions for proper use of your spray.

<https://www.biosphereinstitute.org/bearspray/>

