



For Immediate Release

Help Prevent Bear Issues: Brown Bears Accessing Unsecured Trash

August 31, 2023 (Anchorage) – The Department of Fish & Game has received multiple reports of brown bears accessing unsecured garbage in south Anchorage. ADF&G is working closely with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers and Anchorage Police Department to investigate these reports. It is important for Alaskans to keep up their “bear etiquette” by ensuring food attractants around homes and neighborhoods are secure. Unsecured attractants are what draws and keeps bears in neighborhoods. Brown bears will defend food sources and can become a serious public safety threat, which is why leaving human food, animal food, or garbage in a manner that attracts bears is a violation of state law and may result in a \$320 fine.

Most homes in this area have garages and it is strongly recommended to keep all trash inside until the morning of trash day. Even if your home doesn’t have a garage, place garbage outside on trash day only. Placing a non-bear resistant trash can outside and on the curb the night before trash day is a municipal code violation in Anchorage. Remove and secure any trash that may be outside, and make sure bear deterrents, such as electric fences surrounding poultry or other small livestock, are operational and turned on.

As winter approaches, bears will be looking for easy food sources. While natural foods are still plentiful, human-provided attractants are particularly inviting to bears. Feeding bears, even unintentionally, is illegal and can result in fines.

To prevent bear problems, biologists suggest the following:

- **Garbage** - Store trash inside buildings or in bear-resistant containers; keep secured until the morning of scheduled pickup. Encourage neighbors to do the same.
- **Electric fences** – Properly constructed electric fences designed to exclude bears can keep bears out of gardens, compost, and away from buildings, chicken coops, and domestic animals. For more information, contact your local department office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livingwithbears.bearfences.
- **Barbecues** - Clean barbecue grills, especially grease traps, after each use.

- **Pets** - Feed pets indoors or clean up excess and spilled food between meals. Store pet food, livestock food, and birdseed indoors or in bear-resistant containers.
- **Bird Feeders** – Keep feeders down April through October, store securely and remove spilled seed.
- **Freezers** - Keep freezers locked in a secure building or otherwise inaccessible to bears.
- **Gardens** - Plant gardens in the open, away from cover and game trails. Only compost raw vegetable matter and turn over compost frequently.

Bear-resistant tipper carts can help keep bears from freely accessing trash while passing through neighborhoods. Alaska Waste, Solid Waste Services, and Northern Waste have bear-resistant tipper carts in stock for only a few dollars more than a standard trash can. Please contact your refuse provider for more information on bear-resistant tipper carts.

In addition to taking preventative measures, people should report incidents of bears frequenting neighborhoods or other populated areas, getting into trash, or showing aggression. Contact the nearest Alaska Department of Fish and Game office during regular business hours or report online at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=reportwildlifeencounter.main>. If the situation involves an immediate public safety concern, call 911.

“So many situations go unreported, or we hear rumors days later via social media,” said Cory Stantorf, Assistant Area Management Biologist. “We want to know any time brown bears are seen in town or populated areas, and people should let us know whenever they see black or brown bears in trash or feeding on human provided food.”

To learn more about coexisting with bears, call or visit your local department office or online at www.alaskabears.alaska.gov.

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