

## Wildlife Awareness & Reporting Practice

### 1.0 Wildlife Awareness and Reporting Practice objectives

The purpose of the *Wildlife Awareness and Reporting Practice* is to provide Cenovus employees and contractors with general information about large mammals that may pose a safety hazard in northern areas in which Cenovus operates. This practice focuses heavily on bears as this is one of the higher potential hazards workers may observe and many of the preventative actions for bears will be applicable for most wildlife. It also provides guidance on:

- Reducing the potential for safety hazards from wildlife-human interactions,
- Reacting appropriately after seeing or encountering a bear, wolf or cougar
- Reporting sightings and encounters
- Ensuring ongoing compliance with the *OHS Code* (Province of Alberta 2009) and *Saskatchewan OH&S Regulations* (Province of Saskatchewan 2009), as well as alignment with the *Alberta BearSmart* program (AESRD 2011). In lieu of guidelines from the Government of Saskatchewan, information from the *Alberta BearSmart* program will be applied to Cenovus assets in Saskatchewan.

### 2.0 Scope

The *Wildlife Awareness and Reporting Practice* applies to all stages of Cenovus operations and activities where staff and contractors may potentially encounter wildlife that potentially pose a high risk hazard with an emphasis on bears. Mitigative measures available for reducing wildlife-human interactions, as well as the encounter protocol for response by Security, Safety and Environment, may vary between locations and regulatory requirements.

While there have been occasional, and often unconfirmed, sightings of grizzly bears in areas where Cenovus operates, this *Practice* focuses mainly on black bears. Information in this *Practice* on bear behaviour, reducing bear-human interactions, and how to deal with encounters and sightings may apply to both species of bear.

This practice incorporates the experiences of field staff, wildlife biologists (both internal and external) and the advice of the *Alberta BearSmart* program as it applies to Cenovus's business. This *Practice* and associated guidelines should not be treated as an exhaustive summary of bear, wolf or cougar safety and should be supplemented with additional training and reading.

### 3.0 Accountabilities

Cenovus staff and contractors involved in all activities and operations are responsible for the implementation of the principles included in this *Practice*, including taking appropriate mitigative measures to deter bears, reporting signs of bears or other wildlife to their Supervisor, stopping work if necessary according to agreed-to guidelines and practices, and following the outlined procedure if a bear is encountered.

### 4.0 Principles

The *Cenovus Wildlife Awareness and Reporting Practice* aligns with the Cenovus Operations Management System (COMS) by assisting staff in minimizing potential impacts to wildlife while promoting safe work practices.

The information included in this *Practice* represents a combination of information provided by internal expertise and bear biology experts as well as Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development's (AESRD) *Alberta BearSmart* program, which will be applied to Cenovus assets in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

## 5.0 Wildlife Basics

### 5.1 Bear basics

If you are working north of Edmonton in Alberta, or north of Prince Albert in Saskatchewan, you are likely working in bear country. As demonstrated in Figure 1, black bears can be found in approximately 75% of Alberta and are the most common species of bear in the areas where Cenovus operates. Consequently, black bears will be the focus of species-specific information in this *Practice*.

To safely coexist with these animals, people need a strong knowledge of their behaviour and a solid understanding of the real risk they impose on public safety (ESRD 2011). As the *Alberta BearSmart* program points out, it is rare for a black bear to attack a human.

#### Description

Despite the name, black bears are not limited to the colour black. They can range from white, blond, cinnamon, or light brown to dark chocolate brown or jet black, with many intermediate variations existing. For that reason, colour alone cannot be used to identify species of bear.

Cinnamon or light brown black bears are often confused with grizzly bears, but lack the prominent shoulder hump observed on grizzly bears, have pointed rather than the rounded ears, and have a much narrower pointed face profile when compared to the broader concave head shape of a grizzly bear.

Black bear adult weights are typically 45–200 kg (100–400 lb.), with females often being smaller than males. All bears have an incredible sense of smell – up to 7 times better than a bloodhound and 2,100 times better than a human being. They can detect animal carcasses upwind from distances in excess of 30 km, and easily detect human food sources in closed vehicles or behind the closed doors of buildings.

#### Biology

Black bears can live in various habitats but are most often associated with forested areas.

Depending on winter severity, black bears emerge from their dens in early April after losing up to 30% of their body weight. Early spring food sources are therefore extremely important to their survival. Until berry crops start to develop in July and August, they rely primarily on other types of vegetation including grasses, sedges, and other plants (dandelions and clover are common) for food which may draw them towards open areas, including the edges of industrial operations. However, it is important to note they will take advantage of all calorie-rich food sources (including garbage and human food) throughout their active period.

Bears mate in late spring or early summer, but otherwise are typically solitary except for females with cubs.



**Figure Error! Main Document Only.: Black and grizzly bear distribution in Alberta (Government of Alberta 2011)**

When berries start to emerge in mid- to late summer, they focus most of their activity on this calorie-rich food in order to increase fat stores needed to survive the winter denning period. In years of poor berry production, bears rely on alternative sources of food and are more likely to be drawn towards accessible human food sources.

Black bears will usually dig new dens in the fall and, depending on sex, enter them between October and November. Females, especially pregnant ones, typically enter dens before males, who remain active for slightly longer periods. Females give birth in the den over the winter, and cubs (typically one to three) will stay with their mothers for up to two years.

## **Food**

A bear's life revolves around food. They must eat enough in approximately seven months to sustain themselves throughout hibernation – even more in the case of pregnant sows.

Bears are predominantly vegetarians, with up to 85% of their diet made up of grasses, sedges, plants and berries. They will also eat insects, especially ants, and will scavenge off carcasses and consume fish where available. Calves are also a source of food during ungulate calving season.

Bears are extremely curious and may be attracted to a wide variety of smells and tastes, including petroleum products such as gas, oil grease, and hydraulic fluids, as well as antifreeze, paints, plastics, and even cigarette butts.

## **Behaviour**

Black bears are usually shy, passive animals, and depending on their level of habituation, tend to avoid people.

Bears are intelligent and very curious animals. They can figure out how to gain entrance to unprotected containers, vehicles, and even buildings in search of new foods,. They will remember specific locations of food sources and return to them.

While most bears are naturally wary of humans and their environments, when they obtain food and have repeated contact without negative experiences or consequences they begin to associate humans with food and lose their fear of them. This is known as becoming "habituated" and can happen to any wildlife. Once this happens, bears are often destroyed due to the low success rate and high cost of relocation.

It is important to remember that all bears are individuals and there are a number of factors that can influence their behaviour toward other bears, wildlife, and human beings. These factors include time of year, physical and mental condition and previous experiences in similar situations. However, all bears will defend three things:

- Their personal space (which can vary between individuals)
- Their cubs
- Anything considered a food source

Always be sure to give bears lots of room and a safe way to retreat. Bears should always be treated with the utmost caution and respect because they can seriously injure and even kill human beings.

Consult the *Alberta BearSmart* program, and specifically the program's *Bears and Industrial Workers* informational video and pamphlet, for in-depth information on bear biology.

## **5.2 Other Wildlife and Safety Considerations**

### **5.2.1 Bear Dens**

Active bear dens can be affected in several ways by winter construction projects between Oct 1 and April 30. Direct mortality may result from clearing activities if bears are in the den at the time of clearing. Bears displaced from their den because of physical disruption face

significantly increased mortality risks, especially bear cubs or pregnant females who are already energetically stressed. Sensory disturbances in close proximity to active dens may lead to den abandonment, and increase mortality risks for bears forced to find new dens once the denning period has started.

Den entrance and emergence varies with weather, local food resources and latitude. Typically, bears enter dens in early to mid-fall and emerge in early to mid-spring. Black bear den in upland forest types, preferring mature conifer or mixedwood stands. They tend to avoid low land (bog) habitat where moisture and meltwater would accumulate. Bears typically re-use den sites but will not re-use dens preferring to dig new dens the following year; however bears using natural rock and tree cavities may use them multiple times. Cenovus has found bears using log decks as dens.

Bear dens can be difficult to find, especially with snow cover.

If a bear den is disturbed:

- Stop clearing activities immediately after a bear is disturbed. If a female is separated from her cubs, she will return to get them. Inform the Field Environmental Advisor.
- Set up a minimum 100 m buffer around the den site (site where the animal was disrupted) as there is the likelihood that the bear will try to return to the original den location
- Avoid clearing the buffered area until the spring and the bear has left the area

## **5.2.2 Wolves**

Wolves are often grey in colour but can vary from white to black, with black wolves being disproportionately high in Alberta. Wolves are social animals, and live in packs that average four to ten animals, but may be as low as two and as high as twenty five. A pack is dominated by an alpha male and female. Wolves howl in order to contact and locate their pack members, and they can detect howls up to 10 km away. Territory size varies, but typically ranges between 100 and 500 km<sup>2</sup>. The average weight for male wolves in Alberta is 48 kg (110 lbs.), with females typically weighing 5-10 kg (10-22 lbs) less. Preferred prey for wolves in Alberta includes moose, white-tailed and mule deer, American bison, woodland caribou and elk. Wolves will also supplement their diet with beaver, snowshoe hare, mice, voles and other rodents, as well as waterfowl and their eggs and some plant material.

Wolves are normally quite secretive, and will often run away when they encounter people. Problems between humans and wolves can occur when the wolf has become habituated as a result of direct or indirect feeding, although attacks on people are extremely rare.

## **5.2.3 Cougars**

Cougars are capable of living in close proximity to human activity, and there has been an increase in cougar sightings in northern Alberta in recent years. Despite these increased sightings, conflict between cougars and humans is extremely rare.

Cougars are considered habitat generalists, and are one of the most adaptable and wide ranging mammals in the world. An adult male cougar weighs between 62 and 90 kg (135-200 lbs.), and a female cougar, between 40 and 50 kg (90-110 lbs.). Cougars are most active at dusk and dawn; however they will roam and hunt at any time of the day or night and in all seasons. In late spring, two-year old cougars typically disperse and become independent of their mothers. While attempting to find a new home range, young cougars may roam widely and this is when cougars are most likely to conflict with humans. Cougars may benefit from forest openings created by industrial development as it increases the amount of edge habitat, which they use for hunting. Deer are the primary prey of cougars in northern Alberta; however they will also hunt hare, beaver, raccoons, grouse, elk, and occasionally livestock.

## **5.2.4 Ungulates**

There are five species of ungulates found in northern Alberta: moose, white-tailed deer, mule deer, American bison, and woodland caribou. Elk sightings in the boreal forest have also increased in recent years. Although often timid and shy, ungulates can be dangerous, and although conflicts with humans are rare, they can be serious. Females are most dangerous in late spring and early summer when they have young, and will defend their new born calves from anything that may pose a threat, and can be very aggressive. Females tend to attack and defend themselves by using their powerful front hooves, and have been known to rear up on their hind legs and stomp on predators or other threats. Male ungulates are most aggressive when they go into their rut during the fall mating season. They will appear agitated and may charge and can use their antlers or horns to maul, stab or knock down the perceived threat.

## **5.2.5 Legally Protected Nests, Breeding Ponds and Dens**

There are laws and approval conditions that protect certain species and their nests, breeding ponds or dens either seasonally or year-round. These laws and conditions mean we do not hurt, harm or harass them and in some cases, establish a buffer around nests or dens.

We need to use caution around nesting birds. If you find an active nest, do not disturb it. Contact your Environmental Advisor if the nest is impeding your work. The law requires that the young get to the point where they leave the nest (fledge). Legislation protects some nests year-round.

Sometimes birds can become a safety hazard when they protect their nests by swooping. It is important to let them fledge their young unless the nests cause an immediate safety hazard, such as fire. If a safety hazard exists or you have any questions about which wildlife require special consideration, contact your Field Environmental Advisor for assistance.

## **5.2.6 Prairie Rattlesnake**

Prairie rattlesnakes are the only venomous snakes in Alberta that we find near Cenovus's southern operations. When a snake encounters a human, it will freeze, move away or if it feels threatened, prepare to strike (coil its body, rattle its tail and rear its head). If you encounter a snake, stop, remain calm, look around for other snakes and slowly move away. While a bite may not be painful, you should always transport a snakebite victim to hospital as snake venom acts on the circulatory system and body tissue. Do not use a snakebite kit. Never try to suck out the venom. Do not use a tourniquet. Do not apply ice. Stay calm and seek immediate medical attention. Prairie rattlesnake venom is hemotoxic meaning it can cause organ or tissue damage, sometime without the victim feeling pain - seeking medical attention is imperative.

## **5.2.7 Injured Wildlife**

It is important to recognize injured wildlife as a potential hazard. Many species have sharp teeth, beaks or claws which they will use to protect themselves. If you encounter wildlife you suspect is injured, contact the field environmental advisor and do not handle yourself.

## **5.2.8 Driving and Wildlife**

While many of Cenovus's driving safety materials discuss wildlife, it is an important hazard to reiterate. Wildlife can use the same travel corridors as humans and driving is one of the highest safety risks many of us face daily. It is important to drive defensively and watch for wildlife on roads. Consider some of these tips for your daily tailgate meetings.

While wildlife may be present around roads throughout the day, pay particular attention at dawn and dusk – plan your work day accordingly if possible. Drive defensively by mentally rehearsing what you could do if an animal suddenly darted out on to the road, watch for headlights reflecting off of an animal's eyes or movement on the side of the road, watch for flickering head or tail lights or the vehicles in front of you – it may be an animal crossing the road.

## 6.0 Prevention, planning, and encounter preparedness

The best way to minimize conflict with wild animals is by practicing prevention, planning a safe work day, and having the knowledge to deal with an encounter. Being "bear smart" is necessary for everyone who works in bear country. **The following goals will use bears as a proxy for other wildlife that may pose a potential safety hazard. Any actions that may be required for specific species will be identified.**

The single most important action anyone can take to prevent wildlife-human conflict is to never feed wildlife or make food or food waste easily accessible. Even small animals like squirrels and foxes can transmit diseases and become a nuisance onsite.

**Employees who feed wildlife (or participate in careless housekeeping activities that allow wildlife access to food or waste), will face disciplinary action, up to and including removal from site, ban from all Cenovus sites or termination.**

### 6.1 Prevention

There are several actions that can be taken on an asset level that can prevent bear encounters. Actions taken for bear encounter prevention will also minimize the potential for encounter with other wildlife (such as wolves or cougars).

As mentioned in Section 5.0, the single most effective way to prevent an interaction with a bear, or any wildlife, is to prevent their attraction to areas where humans are living and working. If there is no food reward then wildlife are less likely to investigate Cenovus's operating areas. This requires diligent waste management by all Cenovus assets.

**Asset Goal #1: Each asset must develop an Asset Specific Wildlife Safety Management Plan, which consists of:**

- 1) a site level implementation plan ,**
- 2) response pathway, and**
- 3) a site inspection methods.**

**This plan should be reviewed annually and corrective actions taken prior to bear emergence from hibernation at the end of March.**

To achieve this goal, it is recommended that each asset review its current approach to bear safety management and identify any reasonable opportunities for improvement. While wildlife like wolves and cougars may be present year round, it is anticipated that an annual review cycle in preparation for bear emergence will adequately address concerns for all wildlife.

The **Site Level Implementation Plan** (CEN-ENV10188) consists of a look back at the wildlife related safety issues and observations from Wild Watch from the previous year and a review of the waste and deterrent management and response methods for the area. Cenovus Environmental Advisors and Wildlife Specialists can assist with plan development, but other departments (camps, in particular) must be included for the plan to be successful.

The **Response Pathway** will document the procedure for response to a potential human-wildlife conflict after a call is received by the designated emergency call number.

Be sure to review:

- Which individuals or departments must be contacted when a call concerning wildlife is received
- What each person's role is

- What resources are available for response
- How they will respond to an incident and who will take the lead in a wildlife situation

This will typically be the responsibility of a combination of Environment, Safety, Security and/or Range Control, depending on the asset. It is recommended that only those trained to interpret and respond to animal behaviour, such as a bear warden when available (as detailed in the *Bear Deterrent and Safe Use Guideline* (CEN-ENV10187), take the lead in wildlife incidents that have a higher risk potential, such as sightings or encounters with large charismatic wildlife (bears, ungulates, wolves or cougars) at camp. The *Bear Monitor Guidelines* from the Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors (CAGC) can be a useful source of information.

It is recommended that mock scenarios be used to review the procedure. Advanced training can be obtained to inform responders; contact your Environmental Advisor for more information. Training, reference material and any other assistance for identified responders to wildlife incidents can be arranged for the asset by the Environmental Advisor.

The **Site Inspection** is completed by Environmental Advisors prior to bear emergence (as bears will serve as a proxy for all wildlife), and is based upon inspection criteria from the *Alberta BearSmart* program. Templates for inspections can be found in the Site Maintenance and Bear Safety Inspection Guideline (CEN-ENV10189). Information from the Site Inspection can inform the Site Level Implementation Plan.

## 6.2 Planning

It is important to incorporate wildlife considerations into pre-job planning and daily tailgate meetings. Supervisors are key to working with their teams to achieve the following goals.

**Supervisor Goal #1: Incorporate wildlife considerations into the safety component of the work plan, a direct report's scope of work and tailgate meetings.**

When planning a project, it is important to assess the potential risk that wildlife, particularly bears, may present to the work crew. Wildlife must be treated just like any other workplace hazard.

The following items are the responsibility of the supervisor or their designate, and may be discussed when a Safe Work Permit is issued:

- Ensuring all workers have basic wildlife awareness training
- Completing and documenting a **task-based risk assessment** for all phases of a project, or of an individual's job description if their role is not project-based. Variables to consider in a risk assessment include:
  - **Nature of the work:** hazards relative to bears may depend on the location, duration, and nature of work, and the potential responses to a bear encounter.

- Determine if anyone will be working alone (refer to the *Working Alone/ Working in Isolation Practice*, CEN-EHS123). While Cenovus's current working alone policy concentrates on maintaining communication, it may be necessary to explore mitigation in case of a wildlife incident. For some scopes of work during the active bear season (typically April 1 to October 31), it may be prudent to not allow anyone to work alone.
    - Should the remote location of a worksite (such as an OSE well) potentially compromise prompt response to wildlife incidents, contact your safety representative, in consultation with the Environmental Advisor, to determine alternative measures. You will need to determine permissible response time. The *Bear Deterrent and Safe Use Guideline* (CEN-ENV10187) may provide alternatives to consider (for example, proximity deterrents like portable electric fences for OSE wells or using spotters if you are working in a remote location and are focused on a single task).
  - **Estimate of likelihood** of encountering wildlife that may pose a safety hazard. This information may be difficult to estimate and can change from year to year with natural population fluctuations. The WildWatch app and website component of the wildlife sighting program launched in 2014 has been designed to gather this type of information. Until the WildWatch program has been collecting information for multiple years and thus providing reliable data, it is recommended that supervisors ask field environment and safety advisors to estimate the likelihood of encountering wildlife that may pose a safety hazard based upon past or current observations.
  - **Seasonality:** are tasks being completed during the active bear season (approximately April 1 to October 31)?
  - **Terrain:** what is the terrain in the work area? Are there river or streams, feeding areas (areas with plentiful berries that would be a concern in mid-summer and lasting into the fall or areas with early vegetation green up, especially grasses, which would be a concern in the spring), and/or possible den sites? Note: Den sites will not be evident until bears start to hibernate around the time of the first lasting snow fall (October or November). Bears do not return to past dens unless it has structural support from tree roots or caves but can return to the same area.
  - **What resources are available:** Is electric fencing in place? Are bear monitors available? What bear deterrents are considered reasonable? If bear spray is a reasonable mitigation measure, bear spray training is required before it may be brought or carried onsite. There may be areas where bear spray will not be permitted. Review the *Bear Deterrent and Safe Use Guideline* (CEN-ENV10187) and the *Site Maintenance and Bear Safety Inspection Guideline* (CEN-ENV10189) for mitigation suggestions that could apply to the type, location, seasonality, and duration of the work.
  - **The circumstances under which a work site may be shut** down because of a safety hazard posed by wildlife, or when it may be mandated that workers work in groups of three or more
- Incorporating wildlife encounters into the emergency response plan.
  - Incorporating waste management and general wildlife awareness into daily safety meetings, particularly during the active bear season (approximately April 1 to October 31). Refer to Appendix B: Wildlife Considerations for tips to consider when planning the work day, and the *Bear Deterrent and Safe Use Guideline* (CEN-ENV10187) for safety considerations when bear deterrents are being used.
  - Ensuring all workers remove themselves to a safe location in the event that a bear, or other potentially dangerous wildlife, enter the worksite. A safe location may be a vehicle, a

building, or simply walking away from the bear. This may require temporary shutdown of work and/or vacating the worksite until the situation has been resolved. The individuals at the appropriate call centre will engage the designated personnel to either advise or respond to a situation. Each asset has a different call centre number which has been listed in Appendix C. Ensuring the worksite is clean and food and food waste is appropriately stored or disposed daily.

- Noting on the Safe Work Permit if bear spray will be onsite or carried while work is being completed.

#### **Did you know?**

**The use of bear deterrent spray for anything other than its intended purpose (i.e., protecting one's self from wildlife) can lead to charges under the Criminal Code of Canada. Charges may include possession of a weapon, assault with a weapon, or administering a noxious thing.**

**Cenovus requires bear spray to be stored in an air tight container when in a building or vehicle. It must not be transported via commercial or charter flights and make sure pilots are aware you are carrying bear spray if travelling by helicopter.**

## **6.1 Preparedness**

Being prepared when working in bear country is one way to ensure all employees and contractors are respectful and confident when there is an interaction with a bear or other potentially dangerous wildlife.

**Individual Goal #1: The Cenovus Wildlife Awareness e-learning module is MANDATORY for all staff working or visiting sites North of Edmonton. It is strongly recommended that contractors take this course or one their employer deems equivalent.**

Effective Spring 2015, all Cenovus employees working north of Edmonton must take the General Wildlife Awareness eLearning module. This module is available for contractors via the [Contractor Connection](#) portal.

Due to the nature of their work, anyone in the following work groups should complete the supplemental module for bear spray deployment. Supervisors will then determine how and when workers will have bear spray available to them to conduct their work.

- Environment (those working outside of operating areas)
- Geophysical
- Earthworks
- Camps
- Any other work or project that requires working outside of operating areas during the active bear season

**Individual Goal #2: All employees must report wildlife sightings and encounters.**

Wildlife is often observed while conducting Cenovus business, but not all bears, wolves or cougars are problem animals that require calling security, Range Control or dispatch.

To help tell the difference, Cenovus has two definitions for wildlife observations: sightings and encounters.

## Sighting

A *sighting* is defined as an instance in which a sighted animal does not pose an immediate or potential threat to humans or property, as defined in Appendix C.

For example, if you are travelling in a vehicle along a remote road (for example, 10 km from any camp or facility) and see a bear running across the road in the distance, this is a sighting and should be reported as such.

**All wildlife sightings must be reported via the WildWatch Observation Tools (the WildWatch app or at [www.iwildwatch.ca](http://www.iwildwatch.ca)) or a Wildlife Observation Form submitted to the field Environmental Advisor.**

Cenovus's Environmental Advisors and those designated to respond to wildlife incidents (such as Range Control) track this information on an ongoing basis to determine potential safety and environmental concerns and plan appropriate mitigation and response actions..

## Encounter

While the majority of observations are passive occurrences, there may be situations where a bear's behaviour or the presence of certain wildlife is perceived as posing a threat to human life or property. This is defined as an *encounter* and includes situations when:

- Bears, wolves or cougars are about to enter or in camp; about to enter or in a plant site; or are at a worksite where workers plan to be onsite for an extended period of time
- Cenovus employees or contractors feel at all threatened by the presence of wildlife, or feel that wildlife may become a threat
- A bear acts defensively toward you **anywhere**
- A bear acts non-defensively (*i.e.*, ignores your presence, advances with head down and ears laid back) toward you **anywhere**
- Wolves or cougars approaches you **anywhere**
- Any aggressive wildlife encounter **anywhere** should be recorded as an encounter. For example, a moose charging or stamping hooves.
- NOTE: smaller animals protecting their young in nests they have established on Cenovus worksites or buildings (*i.e.*, birds protecting their nests by swooping) would be considered defensive and would not be considered an encounter. If you need to access an area that wildlife is protecting, or there is an immediate safety hazard (such as fire) contact field Environmental Advisors for advice on how to proceed.

Upon receipt of a report of an encounter, wildlife incident responders (such as Environment or Range Control) will determine if action needs to be taken to resolve the encounter or prevent possible future encounters.

**Refer to Appendix C to learn how to respond to an encounter.**

When it is safe to do so, try to record key information about the encounter such as:

- Exact time and location
- Proximity to site
- Number of adult animals
- Number of cubs (if any)

- Direction of travel

All sighting and encounter information helps Environmental Advisors track wildlife observations in the area and assists in identifying circumstances where further management is warranted.

**Developing practical solutions for worker safety with respect to wildlife is a constantly evolving process. If you have suggestions for solutions or challenges not captured here please share them with your co-workers and an Environmental Advisor.**

## 7.0 Internal references

1. CEN-EHS022 – *EH&S/Operations Risk Management Practice*
2. CEN-EHS108 – *Personal Protective Equipment Standard*
3. CEN-EHS234 – *Roles and Responsibilities Standard*
4. CEN-EHS123 – *Working Alone/Working in Isolation Practice*
5. CEN-ENV10187 – *Bear Deterrent and Safe Use Guideline*

## 8.0 External references

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resources Development (ESRD). 2011. *Alberta BearSmart Program Manual*. Available online: <http://esrd.alberta.ca/recreation-public-use/alberta-bear-smart/documents/AlbertaBearSmart-ProgramManual-May2011.pdf>

Alberta BearSmart Vimeo Video, *BearSmart – Think like a Bear!*

Alberta BearSmart YouTube Video, *Proper Use of Bear Spray*

Herrero, Stephen. 2002. *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance*. McClelland and Stewart, Revised Edition, 304 pages.

Saskatchewan Environment. 2014. *Bears in Saskatchewan*. Accessed online, June 15, 2014: <http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=e32884ef-2e1e-46d6-b704-7390b7012973>

Ursus International. 2014. *Black Bears (Ursus americanus)*. Accessed online, June 24, 2014: <http://www.ursusinternational.org/en/factsblack.html>

## 9.0 Change management

Proposed changes to this practice can be directed to Health & Safety Programs & Projects.

## 10.0 Definitions and acronyms

Definitions and acronyms for safety documents are described in the link below:

Cenovus CEN-EHS243, Definitions and Acronyms

## Appendix A: Applicable legislation

The *Wildlife Awareness and Reporting Practice* encompasses requirements of the following legislation:

- **Alberta OHS Code (2009)**
  - Part 2 – *Hazard Assessment, Elimination and Control*
    - All applicable sections

- **Saskatchewan OH&S Regulations (amended to 2009)**
  - Part III – *General Duties*
    - All applicable sections

## Appendix B: Wildlife Considerations for The Work Day

The best way to minimize conflict with wild animals is by practicing prevention, planning appropriately and having knowledge to deal with potentially dangerous situations. Being “bear aware” is necessary for anyone working in bear country. The following is a list of considerations to incorporate into your daily routine and safety meetings.

### Daily tailgate meeting

- Incorporate scenarios into your tailgate meeting. Examples include:
  - A crew is working several kilometres from camp. There are still a few hours left to the work day. A team member receives a call that there is a bear at camp. What should the team do?
    - Suggestions: Supervisor keeps track of the situation and if the bear is still at camp at the end of the work day, have a brief meeting to review what to do when entering camp. Appropriate actions may include driving in convoy; radioing camp when approaching to get the bear’s location and receive advice on where to go; after parking, preparing bear spray; walking as a group to an agreed-upon location; awaiting further direction until the situation is resolved.
  - The work day has finished and you see a bear in camp while walking from the cookhouse to your room. What you would do.
    - Suggestions: Follow the response flow chart; don’t run; assess bear behaviour; evaluate your access opportunities to get to a building or vehicle; identify if bear deterrent station is available; notify appropriate emergency response depending on asset (Security, Range Control, site supervisor, etc.)

### Considerations for those at operating sites

Put all waste or compost materials in bear-proof containers. If you see garbage, pick it up and put in bear-proof containers. This is applicable all year round.

Bears can open doors and get into vehicles and buildings, so it is important to not give a bear the incentive to enter.

Wildlife learn quickly. If wildlife receive a food reward from a vehicle or building, they will continue to return even if the source of attractant has been removed. It is imperative that they do not learn that humans, buildings or vehicles mean food.

It may be challenging to have a practical solution to protect your lunch depending on your work site or tasks to be completed. When planning your work day or at your safety meetings, talk about where and how you will be storing your food and food waste. A solution may be to keep food in areas of high human activity or in a bear vault (a commercially-available airtight container) or other **air tight** container.

Avoid leaving food in an area that is unattended. Don’t leave your lunch in your truck when you are not in it or the truck is not in view; avoid leaving food out in a building that does not have high human activity (keeping in mind that bears can open fridge doors); depending on what you are doing, consider carrying your lunch with you.

Even if bears are not a concern it is a good practice to not leave food lying around your office or workspace in a building, as squirrels and foxes are known to be a nuisance in and around Cenovus buildings.

In the evening, keep trucks free of food and garbage inside and out.

Consider leaving vehicles and buildings unlocked, or have a swipe card for buildings, to allow easy access to areas of safety should a bear come onto the work site. If this approach is chosen for the worksite, it is **imperative** that vehicles and buildings be free of attractants, because

bears can open doors. Remove all valuables from your vehicle if you choose to leave your vehicle unlocked.

Vehicles and buildings can be locked but there is still no guarantee that a bear will not gain access if it perceives the reward is worth the effort. Note also that locked doors will limit available safe locations in the event of a bear encounter. As a team, agree on the action to be taken and communicate it to all onsite.

Do not pour leftover coffee or juice/pop outside the building.

At times of high bear activity near operating areas it is prudent to keep doors and windows closed at all times. It may be necessary to consider alternate ways of cooling offices.

### **Considerations for those working with food waste or outside of operating sites ("in the bush")**

Consider transporting food and food waste in a bear-proof container such as a bear vault.

Always be alert and aware of your surroundings. This means being aware of any potential bear attractants near your work site, either natural (berry patches, streams) or human-created (trash cans, lunch foods), which may pose a potential safety hazard.

Be aware of situations that may compromise your ability to hear or see, such as low light conditions at dawn or dusk, loud streams, operating equipment, high wind or heavy rain.

Watch for evidence of bear activity, and any sounds or movements in the forest surrounding your work site. Be aware of your surroundings and have access and escape routes mapped out.

Be sure not to corner any wildlife. If wildlife feels trapped or cornered they will use the quickest escape route they can find.

Plan an escape route for yourself (but never run).

Make noise. The human voice can be an effective means of letting wildlife know you're in the area.

Use the buddy system. There is some evidence that groups of three or more are effective at discouraging a bear encounter. Always let someone know where you're going and how long you anticipate you'll be.

During a shift, consider assigning one person as a "bear watch" whose primary task is to be on the lookout for bear signs and is trained in the use of bear deterrents. In these situations, it is important to stay close to your bear watch.

If transporting waste to a garbage bin in a vehicle, circle the garbage bin before getting out. When you get out of the vehicle and before you approach the bin, make some noise (sing, shout, blow a whistle, sound an air horn, etc.) in case a bear is in a blind spot or inside the bin.

If you require multiple trips to take food waste from a building, never prop open a door. Bears have been known to watch buildings and figure out the waste removal routine. They could enter the building when you step away.

If the garbage bin area is fenced check there are no bears inside before you enter and make sure the gate is closed.

## Appendix C: How to Respond to a Wildlife Encounter

In the event that you come face-to-face with a bear, or any other large wildlife, there are four key steps to take:

- 1) **Stop.** This is the single most important step. Despite the natural instinct to turn and run in the other direction, the safest movement is to stop so you can assess the situation and decide what behaviour is being exhibited by a bear or what the potential threat other wildlife may be posing. Running can entice bears, wolves or cougars to chase after you.
- 2) **Assess.** Is this a sighting or an encounter? Does the bear know I am here? For bears, is it acting defensively, non-defensively or passively? Is the animal moving away on its own?
- 3) **Plan.** Determine what the appropriate action is given the wildlife's behaviour and your situation.
- 4) **Act.** Carry out the plan you developed in step 3. You may have to reassess your plan if your action didn't work. Adapt to the situation.

Be prepared to change your plan at any time in response to the situation.

**If wolves or cougars do not run away in your presence always consider them aggressive; they do not act defensively when threatened like bears. Follow the same actions you would take for a non-defensive bear: prepare deterrent if you have it, shout, make yourself look larger, wave your arms, and group together. If knocked down, fight back.**

**These actions are also applicable in the rare situation of an aggressive, charging ungulate (i.e., moose or deer).**

**Refer to the *Wildlife Encounter Flow Chart* in Appendix B for further information.**

Once you are out of immediate danger, be sure to do the following to ensure the safety of others:

- Remove yourself to a safe area (such as a vehicle, building, or an area a distance away from the bear)
- Inform your supervisor, who will:
  - Call the appropriate call centre (see Appendix C) to inform them of the encounter
  - Inform others in the immediate area of the threat and have them move to a safe area
- The call centre will engage the agreed upon call-out procedure, which may include the dispatch of trained individuals, such as a designated bear monitor, to shepherd or haze (scare off) the bear
- If you are already in a safe location, do not approach the bear again to attempt to haze (scare off) it yourself. You are only responsible to get yourself to safety. This is a potentially dangerous situation, and Cenovus has a response procedure at each asset to respond, determine the threat level and enact a management plan.

## Appendix C (cont'd.): Wildlife Encounter Flowchart

### What to Do When You Have a Wildlife Encounter

(as adapted from the *Alberta Bear Smart Program*, wildlife experts and incorporating the Cenovus specific reporting process)

