

DOES BEAR SPRAY WORK?

Prepared by the Be Bear Aware Campaign

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THIS SPECIAL SECTION CONTAINS ARTICLES THAT MAKE COMMON MISTAKES ABOUT BEAR SPRAY. They insinuate all bear sprays are the same – they are not. In addition, pepper spray is often used instead of bear spray and it is not legal to be sold as a bear spray. Without clarifying these claims, much of what is listed below can mislead consumers. Further, the instructions for bear spray that are given out are often inadequate and misleading. Please read with caution.

1. [Research Report – Efficacy of Bear Deterrent Spray in Alaska](#)
(Tom Smith, Stephen Herrero, Terry Debruyne & James Wilder-2008)

science

2. [Does Bear Spray Work? The Science is clear, right? Not so fast, according to, well, Science.](#) (Outside Online)



3. [The claim that bear spray works better than a firearm to protect you from bears IS JUNK SCIENCE](#) (Truth About Guns-January 2, 2018)



4. [2008 Bear Spray Report](#)
(Federal Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee-June 2008)

science

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- 1) [Pistols for Defense Against Bears? Failures are Rare](#)
(Ammoland-February 16, 2018)
 - 2) [Bear Spray Fail?](#) (Craig Medred-September 19, 2018)
 - 3) [Bear Ignored Spray](#) (Craig Medred-June 30, 2017)
 - 4) [Bear Spray, Yes or No?](#) (Craig Medred-June 29, 2017)
 - 5) [Double Bear Attack Survivor Interviewed at Shot Show](#)
(Ammoland-February 14, 2018)
 - 6) [Was Bear Spray Effective in the Mark Uptain Grizzly Fatality?](#)
(Ammoland-February 14, 2019)



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7) [Life with Bears](#) (Craid Medred-May 22, 2017)

8) [Another Bear Spray Failure – Bow Hunter Mauled](#)
(September 13, 2017)



The Be Bear Aware Campaign has conducted its own study and review of bear spray over the past 30 years, specifically focusing on instances of bear spray use, why it may not have worked in some scenarios, and the false and misleading instructions provided for bear spray use. **We conclude that quality bear spray is the most effective deterrent against a highly agitated charging bear.** Firearms may be effective against a charging bear, however, you must be very skilled, aiming takes away valuable time, a wounded bear sometimes continues its charge to make contact, and innocent bystanders have been accidentally shot and killed. The Be Bear Aware Campaign promotes the safety standards produced during the **research and development at the University of Montana** that led to the creation of bear spray.

- **The spray duration should be at least 7+ seconds.** It is possible to be charged multiple times by one bear, or charged by more than one bear at the same time. This duration also compensates for erratic user spraying, wind, rain, and cold.
- **The spray distance should be at least 30+ feet.** This distance provides enough time for the charging bear to feel the irritating and inflammatory effects of bear spray causing it to divert its charge.
- **ALWAYS CALL IT BEAR SPRAY.** This is important to help reduce confusion between bear spray and pepper sprays made for personal defense.

BEAR SPRAY INFORMATION, demonstrations, instructions for proper use, and what to do if you encounter a bear is available on our website and YouTube channel. Click here to access a [quick links](#) document to our bear spray resources.



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