



Commercial Bear Viewing Association of British Columbia

www.bearviewing.ca
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604-762-7751; info@bearviewing.ca

CBVA Best Practices Guidelines`

These guidelines reflect the experience of the Commercial Bear Viewing Association of British Columbia (CBVA) member companies who, collectively, represent many thousands of hours and years of incident free, enjoyable, and sustainable bear viewing in various regions of B.C.

Our best practices have evolved in an adaptive fashion. What does that mean? Basically it starts with the premise that we as operators desire to have as minimal an impact on bears as we can. Thirty years ago when some of our members pioneered this industry in B.C. there were no guidelines and little research on how to safely view bears in the wild. These companies would try a technique or strategy designed for low impact viewing and if they saw a negative outcome (i.e., a stressed bear) they would modify their viewing behaviour and start again. Over many years of this adaptive viewing, our members have evolved techniques and strategies that we believe are highly effective. These guidelines also have had key input from a number of respected wildlife biologists. Following these guidelines allow our members to offer guests a quality viewing experience while minimizing impact on the environment and the bears.

These best practices guidelines are meant to be used in concert with any tenure or protocol agreements that have been signed by our members with government or First Nations as well as with any applicable provincial or federal laws. CBVA member companies strive for good relations with government and First Nations. We will link where appropriate with other industry, environmental, and academic organizations to promote sustainable wilderness viewing and protection for bears and their ecosystems. We are committed to continuing to evolve our viewing techniques and strategies as new research and our experience dictates. Consequently, we help to fund important, professional research on human-bear interactions.

We are fortunate in B.C. to have grizzly bears, black bears, and the Kermode black bear subspecies that has both black and white-coloured bears; the white-coloured bears are commonly known as spirit bears. All these bears are wild, elusive, and highly intelligent. They are a symbol of our wilderness and a touchstone for that mystical, timeless connection we have with the Earth. Our members and our guests witness a side to these animals that most of the public never see. Our guests are able to see bears going about the day-to-day work of living - mating, feeding, hunting, resting, playing, fighting, and learning. This makes us all appreciate bears for what they are and makes wildlife viewing a remarkable and moving experience.

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Guide Training and Certification

Guide Training

CBVA member companies will meet or exceed industry standards in staff training. In addition to training specific to interactions with bears as outlined under Guide Certification below, member companies will provide for, or expect staff to have relevant training in environmental awareness, human safety, and appropriate response to accidents or emergencies.

The following are considered important guide skills:

- ❖ Sensible approach to safety and good judgement.
- ❖ Risk management assessment skills appropriate to a wilderness setting.
- ❖ Appropriate first aid training for the guiding locations and conditions, including CPR.
- ❖ Ability to carry out an emergency response plan using available resources.
- ❖ Technical skills such as boat handling, radio commercial operator competency, vehicle handling skills on rough terrain, group management on land.
- ❖ Effective nature interpretation, communication, and human management skills.
- ❖ Knowledge of local terrestrial and marine ecology.
- ❖ Knowledge of local geography, First Nation and other human culture, and history.

Guide Professional Development

Examples of participatory activities to enhance and broaden skills relevant to being an effective bear viewing guide at all levels, include:

- ❖ Attending CBVA professional development webinars or workshops.
- ❖ Attending CBVA annual meetings.
- ❖ Re-attending or supporting a CBVA level 1 course.
- ❖ Working (paid or volunteer) with bear or other wildlife research or management agencies or non-government organizations.
- ❖ Attending conferences or workshops on bear research or management or wildlife viewing research or management.
- ❖ Visiting bear viewing areas around North America.



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- ❖ Reading literature or viewing films on bear or on other native animal and plant biology and ecology.
- ❖ Giving bear biology or ecology talks to schools or other public groups.
- ❖ Leading nature interpretation walks or talks for Natural History societies or clubs.

Relevant Training Programs

Examples of other training relevant to being a well-rounded bear viewing guide at all levels, include:

- ❖ First Aid Certification (the specific type of first aid training required often is dictated by an employer), e.g., WorkSafe BC level 1 or 2 first aid, Wilderness first aid, Marine basic or advanced first aid, CPR certification (level A, B, or C).
- ❖ Transport Canada Marine Certifications, e.g., Marine Emergency Duties (MED A1, A2, or A3), Small Vessel Operator Proficiency (SVOP), Restricted Operator Certificate - Maritime (ROC-M) or Maritime Commercial (ROC-MC).
- ❖ Outdoor leadership programs, e.g., Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of British Columbia guide certification courses (www.skgabc.com), Paddle Canada leadership programs (www.paddlecanada.com), Association of Canadian Mountain Guide certification programs (www.acmg.ca).
- ❖ Outdoor skills programs, e.g., boating courses (Sail Canada www.sailing.ca, Canadian Power and Sail Squadron www.cps-ecp.ca), animal tracking courses (www.naturetracking.com, www.trackercertification.com), photography courses.

Guide Certification

The CBVA expects their member companies to only use bear viewing guides possessing CBVA guide certification. There are three progressive levels of CBVA guide certification: “Level 1”, “Level 2”, and “Level 3”, which are described in detail below. CBVA member companies will ensure all Level 1 to 3 guides employed by them are guide members of the CBVA and will make CBVA membership a mandatory condition of employment.

Prior to spring 2018 there were two levels of CBVA guide certification, “Assistant Guide” and “Full Guide”. All current CBVA Assistant Guides in good-standing will henceforth be considered Level 1 guides. All current CBVA Full Guides in good-standing will henceforth be considered Level 3 guides.



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Achieving CBVA Level 1 Bear Viewing Guide certification requires attending a 2-day CBVA-sanctioned Level 1 course and passing a bear awareness and safety knowledge quiz, among other requirements. The foundations of the Level 1 course are the CBVA *Bear Viewing Guide Training Resource Manual* and *CBVA Best Practices Guidelines*. At a minimum, course content includes:

- Introduction to the CBVA
- Bear characteristics, society and motivations
- Bear biology and ecology
- Bear to bear interaction and behaviour
- Staying safe in bear and human encounters
- Minimizing effects on bears of viewing activity
- Guide leadership
- Types of bear viewing
- Field skills and guest education

Several Level 1 courses are typically offered each year and are organized by individual companies or the CBVA. Individual companies also can develop their own Level 1 course appropriate to their type of operation using the CVBA 2-day course and curriculum as a foundation and by using a CBVA-sanctioned instructor. Such training programs must be evaluated and approved by the CBVA Education and Certification Committee.

Level 1 Bear Viewing Guide Certification Requirements

- ❖ Must complete a 2-day, CBVA-sanctioned, Level 1 Bear Viewing Guide training course and must pass a bear awareness and safety knowledge quiz.
- ❖ Upon course completion and successfully passing the quiz, certificates are issued for “Level 1 Bear Viewing Guide” and “Bear Awareness and Safety Training”.
- ❖ Must have first aid certification and any other required certifications appropriate for the guiding locations and conditions.
- ❖ Must become a bear viewing guide member of the CBVA for at least one year following the course as a condition of Level 1 certification. This 1-year membership is included in the course curriculum fee for each student paid to the CBVA by the company or organization hosting the course.

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- ❖ Must maintain membership status with the CBVA to retain guide certification. Some companies may make CBVA membership a condition of employment.
- ❖ If CBVA membership lapses for three years, then application for re-instatement as a Level 1 guide must be made to the CBVA Education and Certification Committee with supporting rationale.

Level 2 Bear Viewing Guide Certification Requirements

- ❖ Must have met the requirements of CBVA Level 1 certification above.
- ❖ Must maintain bear viewing guide membership with the CBVA in good standing.
- ❖ If CBVA membership lapses for five years, then application for re-instatement as a Level 2 guide must be made to the CBVA Education and Certification Committee with supporting rationale.
- ❖ Must have first aid certification and any other required certifications appropriate for the guiding locations and conditions.
- ❖ Must log at least 150 hours experience as a bear viewing guide, whether in B.C. or another jurisdiction.
- ❖ At least 75 of the required 150 hours experience must be **Bear Interaction** as detailed below. The remaining hours can be **Bear Search** or **Bear Sign**.
 1. **Bear Interaction** – Directly viewing or interacting with bears in a bear viewing context can be logged as actual time regardless of the type of viewing, i.e., boat-based, land-based hiking (roving), or stand-based. Directly interacting with bears while working with film crews, journalists, or researchers also can be logged as actual time. Any bear viewing or interaction ≤ 15 minutes can be logged as 15 minutes.
 2. **Bear Search** – Time searching for bears, but resulting in no bear viewing or interaction should be logged as half the actual time.
 3. **Bear Sign** – Time spent in looking for and interpreting bear sign, foods, or habitat with no bear viewing or interaction should be logged as half the actual time.
- ❖ Must log time separately for each of the three types of experience detailed above even if they occur on the same outing. The **CBVA Log Spreadsheet** provides a way to partition and track time among the three activities.
- ❖ Must also provide separate, more detailed documentation of at least 25 bear encounters using the **CBVA Bear Encounter Form**. These forms should detail bear



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encounters where a guide particularly evolved their skills. Proficiency in the following skills should be evident from the bear encounter forms:

- Gauging a bears level of comfort from afar; observing and understanding bear body language and stress indicators
- Understanding stress sources in the area and how they may affect a bear's behaviour
- Managing a group during viewing
- Having encounters with bears drawing on a range of skills (e.g., meeting a bear on a trail; a bear approaches a group or boat closer than anticipated)
- Managing a group during a close bear encounter
- ❖ Guides should record guiding experience in field log books, but experience details must be transferred to the **CBVA Log Spreadsheet** and **CBVA Bear Encounter Form** (when appropriate). The log spreadsheet and bear encounter forms must be submitted with a Level 2 application.
- ❖ Must submit a Level 2 bear viewing guide application form, CBVA log spreadsheet, at least 25 CBVA bear encounter forms, and a CBVA evaluation and recommendation form signed by a Level 3 Bear Viewing Guide to the CBVA Education and Certification Committee.
- ❖ Must outline on the Level 2 application form other experience or training that is relevant to being a safe and effective bear viewing guide. Examples of this are listed under Guide Professional Development and Relevant Training Programs above.

Level 3 Bear Viewing Guide Certification Requirements

- ❖ Must have met the requirements of CBVA Level 2 certification above.
- ❖ Must be a bear viewing guide member of the CBVA in good standing.
- ❖ If CBVA membership lapses for five years, then application for re-instatement as a Level 3 guide must be made to the CBVA Education and Certification Committee with supporting rationale.
- ❖ Must have first aid certification and any other required certifications appropriate for the guiding locations and conditions.
- ❖ Must log an additional 200 hours experience in **Bear Interaction** beyond the Level 2 requirement above. These means a minimum total of 275 hours of **Bear Interaction**



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and 350 hours of **Bear Interaction, Bear Search, or Bear Sign** together as a Level 1 or 2 guide.

- ❖ Must log time separately for each of the three types of experience using the **CBVA Log Spreadsheet** even if they occur on the same outing.
- ❖ Must provide separate, more detailed documentation of at least 50 bear encounters beyond the Level 2 requirement using the **CBVA Bear Encounter Form**. This means a minimum total of 75 forms as a Level 1 or 2 guide. These forms should detail bear encounters where a guide particularly evolved their skills. Proficiency in the same skills outlined for a Level 2 guide above should be evident from the encounter forms.
- ❖ Guides should record guiding experience in field log books, but experience details must be transferred to the **CBVA Log Spreadsheet** and **CBVA Bear Encounter Form** (when appropriate). The log spreadsheet and bear encounter forms must be submitted with a Level 3 application.
- ❖ Must submit a Level 3 bear viewing guide application form, CBVA log spreadsheet, at least 50 CBVA bear encounter forms beyond the Level 2 application, and a CBVA evaluation and recommendation form signed by a Level 3 Bear Viewing Guide to the CBVA Education and Certification Committee. The CBVA Education and Certification Committee may request copies of a guide's field log books to verify elements of the log spreadsheet or encounter forms, so log books should be adequately maintained.
- ❖ Must include details on the Level 3 application form regarding:
 - Demonstrated experience with more than one species of bear.
 - Demonstrated experience in a range of bear viewing locations.
 - Demonstrated experience with multiple bear viewing methods.
 - Work or mentoring with an existing Level 3 guide.
 - Other experience or training that is relevant to being a safe and effective bear viewing guide. Examples of this are listed under Guide Professional Development and Relevant Training Programs above.

Guest Relations and Education

The success of any bear viewing operation is enhanced by well-informed and respectful guests. This, in turn, requires effective education information and knowledgeable and conscientious staff. All CBVA members will strive to add interpretative value to their programs and the education component of guided programs will be given strong weight.



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To this end, staff will not only possess high levels of knowledge of bear ecology but be skilled at imparting that knowledge to guests using nature interpretation principles.

Any information that guides can provide that increases people's understanding of bears can increase guest's appreciation and respect for bears. Guests are more likely to follow viewing guidelines if they understand the negative implications to bears and other wildlife of ignoring them.

In addition, member companies will strive to educate, where and when possible, other user groups, including private travellers and commercial bear viewing operators not part of the CBVA, in the methods and philosophy of sustainable bear viewing. As such, the CBVA will strive to be ambassadors for the industry.

Guest Safety and Education Briefing

All bear viewing guests will be given a safety and education briefing that emphasizes the following points. Additional information will be provided to guests depending whether viewing is boat-based or land-based, as outlined in those sections.

General Safety

- Guides will accompany guests during all outings.
- Guests are required to stay close to the guide at all times.
- Guests will be warned to dress warmly whenever venturing out, particularly when they may be occupying a viewing site away from camp for several hours.
- Guests will be encouraged to try to keep dry in cold and wet weather, particularly their underclothes and socks.
- The safety procedure should the guide or one of the guests be injured.

Safety around Bears

- What is food-conditioning in bears and why it is essential to minimize the chance bears will be exposed to human food, garbage, or other attractants to bears.
- When it is necessary to carry food and beverages for longer outings, the food and any resulting garbage will be packed in air-tight or bear-proof containers and be kept with the guide at all times.
- The expected action of guests when at viewing areas.

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- The potential risks associated with viewing bears at close range.
- The type of bear encounters guests should expect.
- The risk of an unwanted or unplanned bear encounter.
- How guests should behave during an unwanted bear encounter.
- The first line of defence in the event that something goes wrong.
- The emergency procedure should the guide or one of the guests be incapacitated by a bear.

Education

- An overview of local bear ecology.
- What are tolerance, human-habituation, and wariness in a bear.
- The importance of minimizing displacement of bears from important habitat.
- Why there are restrictions on movement to and within bear viewing areas.
- Noise and movement while viewing bears shall be kept to a minimum.
- Smoking is not permitted while viewing bears.
- Photographic flash devices are not permitted when viewing or photographing bears.
- Guests are not to signal to the bears in any way using hand motions or auditory signals.
- Bears may be affected by such things as strong smelling perfumes or deodorants so guests should avoid using them.

Boat-based Viewing

- Guests must wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's) at all times when in inflatable craft, small vessels, or kayaks.
- Operators will adhere to all current Ministry of Transport small vessel safety regulations", where a small vessel is defined as a vessel under 8 metres.

Land-based Viewing

- Guests must stay on established pathways and trails.
- Guests will be warned to stay alert and aware of conditions underfoot, as well as, hanging branches, rocks, logs and roots.

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Risk Management

- Member companies must hold themselves to the highest standard of care and safety for guests and bears.
- Member companies will articulate a thorough emergency and contingency response plan and ensure their employees have appropriate training on its contents. Guests should be briefed to the level appropriate as outlined in section 3.1. The emergency response plan should include:
 - Protocol for using bear spray (e.g., how it is carried, types, capsaicin content, size, etc.).
 - First aid protocols. That is, level of training of staff, types of kits at camp and carried on outings, ancillary equipment available (e.g., spine boards, neck braces), procedures to record injuries and first aid administered, equipment maintenance.
 - Protocol for using communication devices (e.g., VHF radio, satellite phone, etc.).
 - List of emergency contact numbers to be readily available to all staff and carried by each guide when on an outing.
 - How guides and guests should behave during an unwanted bear encounter.
 - How to report a bear that poses a risk to human safety, such as a food-conditioned, predaceous, or injured bear, to a Conservation Officer (CO) or RCMP officer.
 - How to use aversive conditioning deterrents on a bear, if necessary. There are few situations where negative reinforcement or punishment of bears will be necessary at a bear viewing area however it is prudent to have the ability to do so when required. The two most likely situations are a bear asserting dominance toward people in unwanted circumstances and a bear that inadvertently gets some food reward from a non-natural attractant and aggressively pursues it.
 - Emergency procedure in case of a guide or one of the guests is injured or mauled by a bear. This emergency procedure should include the following information:
 - The first priority is for the guide or guests to neutralize the threat from the bear if there is a safe means to do so, such as use of bear spray or a firearm.
 - The second priority is to secure the group and attend to the casualty, if it is now safe to do so.



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- Arrange for emergency evacuation of the casualty if there is serious injury by a bear. The casualty should get professional medical help even if the injuries do not seem serious as the risk of infection from bear bites or scratches is high.
 - The injury or mauling should be reported to a CO or RCMP officer as soon as possible. Any information deemed relevant to an investigation by the CO or RCMP must be provided.
 - Any time there is serious human injury caused by a bear a CO or RCMP officer likely will travel to the scene right away to investigate.
 - Ensure people on site minimize disturbance to the scene and do as much as possible to preserve evidence; warn others not to go in to the area of the mauling.
- Member companies will strive to reduce other potential hazards to guests as much as possible. For example,
- Eliminate or reduce any feature on pathways or trails that may conceal a bear and increase the chance of a surprise encounter at close range. For example thick vegetation, such as shrubs, that may obscure visibility should be thinned or selectively removed on either side of a trail. Blind corners should be remedied by straightening the trail as much as possible.

Access to Viewing Sites

- No helicopter or aerial viewing is permitted.
- Fixed wing aircraft or helicopter must maintain a minimum flyover distance, which is 500 feet of vertical height and 1000 feet of lateral distance.
- Vehicle and boat access must be done in a manner such as to minimize bear disturbance.
- Access routes must circumnavigate critical bear habitat, wherever possible.

Bear Viewing Guidelines

- Member companies will strive to meet the CBVA goal of safely viewing bears in a natural setting while minimizing impacts on them, and encourage the general public, other operators and film crews to do the same. An animal's need to forage, rest, or travel should take precedence over viewing activities and guests desire to get a closer look.



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- Member companies can maintain safe and minimally disruptive interactions between humans and bears if a few guiding principles are followed:
 - Bears must not get access to non-natural attractants, such as human food or garbage.
 - People must respect bears “personal space” and never closely approach, crowd, pursue, or displace bears.
 - People must be willing to tolerate some bears in close proximity but also must reinforce in bears respect for human boundaries.
 - People must behave in as predictable a manner as possible around bears.
 - People must stay together as a group while viewing bears.
 - People must allow time for wary or less tolerant bears to feed and otherwise exploit available resources free from humans or human activity.
- Although the individual circumstances of bear viewing are often dynamic, it is important for operators and their guides to follow some minimum standards during viewing that adhere to these principles. The following outlines conditions on viewing that will help achieve these guiding principles.

Avoiding Food-Conditioning in Bears

- Every effort will be made to avoid food-conditioning of bears in and around bear viewing areas. Each operator also will institute measures to eliminate introduction of other attractants such as garbage and human waste into bear viewing areas.
- When it is necessary to carry food and beverages for longer outings, the food and any resulting garbage will be packed in air-tight or bear-proof containers and be kept with the guide at all times.

Minimizing Disturbance & Separation Distance

- Minimizing noise and movement while viewing bears helps limit disturbance to them.
- It may be advantageous to remain inconspicuous while watching bears from a long distance, but in most cases it is best to stay in the open where bears can see people and choose to avoid them if they wish.



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- Spatial and temporal restrictions on human activity may be necessary at specific viewing sites to ensure that wary or less tolerant bears have access to important feeding sites.
- The distance at which bears allow people to approach varies significantly in different situations and between individual bears depending on their tolerance of people or level of habituation to human activity. Human behaviour also has a large impact on the distance at which a bear will negatively react to human presence. Bears use body language and vocalizations to communicate with each other and with humans. The better operators and guides understand these signals the more disturbance of bears can be avoided.
- In most bear viewing situations, guides will establish the distance between their group and the bear(s) they are attempting to watch. This distance will be dictated by a variety of factors including, the movement, activity and behaviour of bears, the mode of viewing (e.g., boat versus land-based, fixed site versus roving), tides, weather, and the movement, activity and behaviour of other viewing groups at the site.
- Once a guide has established a group at a respectful location and distance from a bear that does not disturb it, the guide will let individual bears decide how close they choose to approach the group. In this way, the minimum separation distance between a group and a bear will largely depend on the comfort of each individual bear. However, guides will set acceptable boundaries for each bear and not allow them to approach any closer. This is particularly important if the bear approaches to try and assert dominance over a group or exhibits excessive curiosity about a group or their equipment.

Predictability

- Consistent use of the same site(s) makes human use more predictable for bears and can help minimize disturbance.
- Consistent and appropriate human response to bears minimizes the chance of dangerous surprise encounters.
- The daily timing of bear viewing is dependent on a number of factors including tides, weather, light conditions, the movement and activity of bears, and the comfort and motivation of guests. However,

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- Guides will endeavour to be as predictable as possible in the daily timing of movements to and occupation of viewing sites. They will take guests to viewing sites at consistent times of the day and for a consistent length of time, as much as possible.
- Guides will ensure no bear viewing takes place before first light and after dark.
- Guides will minimize bear viewing in very poor visibility such as during heavy rain or fog.

Approaching a Bear

- Upon approach by a viewing group, a bear will check out the group to see what potential threat they pose. If it is comfortable with the group, then the bear should resume its normal activity with only occasional glances to monitor the group.
- At all times while approaching and viewing bears, guides will watch for behavioural signs indicating a bear is becoming nervous or stressed with the presence of the group, including:
 - A pause in activity or regularly stopping what it is doing and looking directly at the group. Not a quick scan or glance, but a direct look before returning to what it was doing.
 - A stiffening stance and change in body orientation.
 - A yawn or scratch or other behaviour, like sitting down, apparently out of place.
 - Moving into the bush and back out repeatedly.
 - Appearing nervous and uncertain.
 - Subtle teeth snapping or jaw popping.
- If a guide feels a bear is becoming stressed and the bear does not resume normal activity when the guide backs off with the group, then the guide will end the viewing session with that particular bear.
- Guides will be aware that if they continue to approach or crowd a stressed bear, it may show increased signs of distress, move off, or approach aggressively. In these situations, the guide has missed the early warning signs, disrupted a bear's normal activity pattern, and had an impact on the bear, which is counter to the intent of bear viewing. These situations will be avoided at all times.
- The following are signs of increased stress or aggression in a bear:
 - Rapid and conspicuous teeth snapping or jaw popping.

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- Moaning or growling.
- Huffing or chuffing, which can escalate to rapid huffing.
- Pacing.
- Running away from or toward the group.
- Salivating; roaring and open-mouth jawing.
- Ears laid back.
- Stamping the ground or paw swatting.
- A hop charge.
- A running charge, which may or may not stop short of contact.

Boat-based Viewing

- As guides scout for bears along shorelines or the perimeter of an estuary, they will be mindful that travelling too close to shore may displace nearby bears.
- All operators will minimize boat speed in the vicinity of an estuary.
- Boats will strive to approach a bear slowly, at an oblique angle to the shore where the bear has been located (i.e., not directly).
- Boats will decelerate well before the noise or wake of the boat disturbs bears or other wildlife (e.g., 200 metres or more depending on the size of boat, weather, behaviour of the bear, etc.).
- Assess the appropriate viewing distance for the particular circumstance based on:
 - the movement, activity and behaviour of the bear,
 - other boats and the number of viewing groups already in the vicinity
 - wind direction
 - depth of water and nature of tides or currents
- Guides will continually monitor the location and behaviour of other boats with viewing groups at a site, particularly around a bear they are viewing or interested in viewing. Too many boats can easily crowd and eventually displace a bear. The number of boats that a bear will tolerate depends on a variety of factors, including its level of habituation to boat traffic, its location in relation to food and security cover, and the movement and behaviour of the boats around it. If there are already two boats viewing a bear (*rafted* kayaks considered one boat), guides will carefully consider the additional stress they may cause to the bear before deciding to approach to view it.

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- Where wind, tide and vessel load permit, guides may opt to propel under oar when optimizing positioning around a bear, particularly when other boats are in the vicinity.
- At no time will a boat approach a bear closer than 50 metres. However, there may be instances when a boat is stationary or drifting silently and a bear's movement brings *it* to a distance closer than 50 metres. All guides will be mindful of maintaining an adequate depth of water beneath the boat to avoid being beached.
- Guides viewing a bear will rotate with waiting boats at an approximate interval of 20 minutes.
- When leaving a viewing session, boats will depart the scene in as unobtrusive a fashion as possible, given the vagaries of wind, tide, current and vessel load.
- Coordination, communication and respect for each other's viewing opportunity will be paramount.

Land-based Viewing

- Guides will carry bear spray that is readily accessible whenever taking a group out on land.
- Groups of people (three or more) are generally safer around bears than individuals, but too large a group also has a greater probability of disturbing or displacing bears. The type of viewing (fixed site versus roving; fixed structure versus fixed location), bear tolerance and the level of habituation to human activity, the actions of people, and local geography and vegetation, will determine the optimal group size at specific viewing sites.
- It is suggested that the minimum size of a roving group be 4 guests
- It is suggested that the maximum size be 12-15 guests.
- In both situations it is suggested that there be no *more* than 8 guests per guide.
- In many cases, the behaviour of the group can be more disruptive to bears than group size, so guides and their group will act appropriately around bears at all times regardless of the group size.
- Members of a single viewing group will stay within a few arms' lengths of one another. Bears are apt to perceive a greater threat from two or more nearby groups than a single cohesive group.

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