**Appendix A: Bear Briefing**

**[from 2021 Shoshone National Forest Resource Protection Guidelines]**

The following link to a YouTube video of an approved bear safety briefing should be used whenever possible to more efficiently deliver briefings and to ensure a consistent approach:[https://youtu.be/9mRUD5BZJH4](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2F9mRUD5BZJH4&data=02%7C01%7C%7C9d642e9e12e24c09402e08d823586e6f%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637298210005628401&sdata=MvCG%2FswB164QPdn1HBulGboP%2BkXP8XG8J3hoaj2kPUM%3D&reserved=0). When in-person briefings are used, the following outline should serve as a guide.

**Bears frequent the area, and personal awareness of their presence is an important part of human safety**. The guidelines below can and should be adjusted to the specific situation at hand. For example, if seasonal bear foods are concentrating bears near the fire area, then additional awareness or human safety precautions should be emphasized.

**1. Introduction**

▪ high densities of grizzly bears throughout most of SNF (include discussion of site-specific bear activity)

▪ black bears also present

▪ awareness of bear safety procedures is important at all times

2**. Food Storage** – this is perhaps the most important issue

▪ Bears obtaining human food/garbage often damage private property and become threats to human safety, plus these bears are usually killed by managers to prevent such problems.

▪ To prevent property damage, human injury or death, and removal of bears, proper storage of food, garbage, and all other attractants is critical and required by FS regulations.

• Individuals may not store food or other bear attractants in their tents or sleeping area. Bear attractants can be anything that has a food odor and includes food, any beverage other than water, empty beverage or food containers, toothpaste, food wrappers, ketchup, and garbage.

• In base camp, all foods and attractants must be stored in enclosed, hard-sided trailers, vehicle cabs, or trunks. All garbage will be stored in the bear-resistant garbage bin. Note: specific food/garbage storage methods may vary, be sure to instruct people on exactly how they are to store food & garbage given these specific considerations. Cover food storage procedures

**3. Bear encounters** – infrequent but must know how to respond when they occur. Emphasize items in italics. Try not to overwhelm with detail.

▪Avoid surprising bears by making noise to alert them of your presence. Remain alert and pay attention for bears or bear sign. Try to leave the area undetected if you see a bear and it is not aware of you.

▪ If you encounter a bear, DO NOT RUN. If you are with others, get together in a group and stand your ground. Bear attacks happen very quickly, so immediately prepare your pepper spray for use. Allow the bear a way out. If the bear is aware of you, talk to it in low, soft tones so it knows you are human and back away slowly but deliberately in the direction from which you came.

▪ Use your pepper spray if the bear approaches closely (range is up to about 30 feet).

▪ If you are contacted by an attacking bear, lay down on stomach with hands over back of neck for protection and do not resist. Be still until you are certain bear has left, otherwise it may resume attacking.

▪ Sows with cubs are especially prone to aggressive behavior if they feel their cubs are threatened, avoid sows with cubs whenever possible. Bears are also likely to aggressively defend animal carcasses (wildlife or livestock). If you detect a carcass by sight or smell, leave the area immediately and quickly. Do not investigate. Notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

▪ Vigorously defend yourself with whatever means are available if a bear attacks at night in camp. Although rare, these are very serious attacks and you need to convince the bear that you are not prey.

▪ Report all bear encounters to your supervisor.

4. **Pepper Spray Safety**

▪ No one is authorized to carry or use pepper spray unless they have first received training in its proper use.

▪ When transporting in vehicle, store outside passenger compartment whenever practical. Transport in a container that can contain an accidental discharge and protect it from rolling, banging, punctures, etc. A bear spray cozy is ideal; a backpack, bag, or cooler is acceptable. Never leave pepper spray in a hot cab or drive with it in the sun or on the dashboard as the canister can explode at temperatures above 120o.

▪ Pepper spray may never be transported in cockpit of aircraft, it always goes in cargo area. It must also be within approved container (i.e., pepper spray cozy). Pilot should be told that it is on board.

▪ Only carry pepper spray that is designed for use on bears. Read the label. The spray should be EPA registered, a minimum canister size of 7.9 oz., and should say that it contains capsaicin or capsaicinoids or derivatives of oleoresin of capsicum. Do not use cannisters that have exceeded their expiration date. Only use cannisters that are in good condition.

▪ Check canister each day to make sure that it is not damaged or leaking. Make sure top is tight. Properly dispose of damaged canisters. Ensure that the safety tab is in place at all times unless use is imminent.

▪ All single resources, and every 3rd crew member must have bear spray on their person at all times while working or otherwise outside of concentrated human activity areas where there are more than 5 people, such as around base camp. Bear spray is checked out to individuals and is returned at the time of demobilization.

▪ Pepper spray is not a substitute for exercising awareness and good judgement. Make every attempt to avoid encounters or leave an encounter without triggering aggressive bear behavior, so that use of pepper spray is not necessary. Spray a bear only at close range—approximately 30 feet or less. Spray against wind only as a last resort as the spray could drift away from the bear or come back at you.

▪ Do not spray your tent or other gear in hopes of deterring a bear. Pepper spray acts as an attractant in such cases. Carefully wash or dispose of any gear that has come into contact with the spray.

▪ Contact normally causes no permanent damage. If accidental contact occurs, flush contacted area with water for at least 15 minutes. Dispose of contact lenses that have contacted pepper spray. Affected person should rest and be monitored for respiratory distress. Seek medical help if complications arise. Persons with asthma or other respiratory conditions may need to avoid exposure to pepper spray, these individuals should consult their supervisor prior to being issued spray or being around crew members with it.

▪ Report any incident where pepper spray was used to your supervisor as soon as possible.