



Secure that Crawl Space!



Black bears typically enter dens between mid-November and December. Wild bears usually look for natural dens in rock crevices, under fallen logs or hollow trees, or dig into the root mass of trees.

However, many homes and properties can become a replacement for natural dens, especially:

- Outbuildings
- Porches, decks and crawl spaces
- Vacation homes
- Campers and RVs

Why Crawl Spaces?

Bears will often look for easy entry routes, like vents and doors, that they can rip open to gain access. They can fit in very small openings. Generally, if a bear can get its head inside, the rest of the bear can follow. Once underneath a house they will often pull down insulation for bedding or scoop up available debris, like pine needles, to create their winter beds. This activity often causes damage to wiring for cable or electricity, piping that supplies heat to the home, and even water or gas lines.

This type of damage can be costly to repair, can leave you without heat for the winter, and can cause flooding or fires. Many repair companies will not provide their services if they know a bear is under a house or if they are unable to access the damaged area safely. Occasionally bears will rip open access to the inside of a home and try to spend the winter indoors.

Allowing a bear to access space in your home is detrimental. This type of habituation can lead to conflicts, not just for your properties, but also for your neighbors' properties. It is also imperative that female bears do not teach their offspring to seek this type of denning. Additionally, bears run the risk of injuring themselves in their attempts to gain entrance.

Secure All Crawl Spaces

Securing your crawl space is one way to help prevent the likelihood of an unwanted guest. Openings that lead under your house should be boarded up with thick plywood that fits inside the seams. If you cover the opening but gaps are present, you create an edge that bears can use as a handle to rip off the wood. If you insert the plywood flush against the siding, or line it up with existing trim, there is nothing for the bear to grab onto and pull. Instead of nails, use screws/bolts to secure the plywood to the building. This can also be done on ground-level windows or other vulnerable points of entry.

Materials You Will Need:

- Plywood (at least three-quarter inch thick)
- Lag screws and/or bolts
- Fender washers

Check out our video on YouTube! [“Secure Your Crawl Space: Help Keep Tahoe’s Bears Wild”](#)

These are a few tips that are easy to implement and may help protect your home and bears. Please do your part to help us keep our bears wild!



Information provided by the State of California / adapted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (2022)