WILLOUGHBY HILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT

35405 Chardon Road
Willoughby Hills, OH 44094
(440) 942-9111

NEWS RELEASE

TOPIC: BLACK BEAR SIGHTING

AGENCIES: Willoughby Hills P.D.

REL DATE: June 27, 2015

REL. BY: Sgt. M. L. Gerardi, Willoughby Hills P.D.

A black bear was sighted in the city of Willoughby Hills today in the area of River Road, Beach Hills Drive, and Eagle Road. The bear was spotted by residents walking through back yards. The bear was not aggressive and left the area. Officers responded, checked the area and were unable to locate the bear.

The following information is from Ohio Department of Natural Resources:

Black bears are usually fearful of people, therefore bear attacks are a rare occurrence. Bears do not attack or kill children or pets as long as the bear is given its space and not cornered. The first thing to do when you see a bear is REMAIN CALM. Generally, black bears are non-aggressive and prefer to flee from the area as soon as they are aware of your presence. If you encounter a bear, and it is not aware of your presence, simply back away from the area slowly. If the bear is aware of your presence and it does not leave the area, avoid direct eye contact with the animal, give the bear an easy escape route and again, simply back slowly away from the area. Always avoid running or climbing trees, which may provoke a chase. An easy way to remember this is to be AWARE:

Act calm and do not run.
Warn the bear that you are near; talk in a firm, calm voice.
Allow space between you and the bear. Step aside and back slowly away. Do not make the bear feel trapped or threatened.
Raise your hands above your head to appear larger if the bear approaches. Clap your hands or shout to scare the bear away.
Exit the area

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Black bears are large animals and can cause significant damage while in search of an easy meal. If your yard is being visited by a black bear there are several things that must be done to ensure that the animal doesn't become a "problem bear". A "problem bear" can be defined as an animal that has lost its natural fear of humans and habitually causes property damage while in search of food. In this instance all potential food attractants must be removed from the area. This includes:

Bird feeders and other wildlife feed-remove feeders, including hummingbird and suet feeders.
Trash receptacles-store your garbage either in a garage or a secure container.
Pet foods-keep pet foods inside, especially at night.
Grease from grills-clean out grease traps after each use; store grill in garage or shed.
Secure beehives-place electric fencing around beehives.
Crops-pick fruit from berry bushes as soon as possible; scare bears out of agriculture fields as soon as damage occurs.

For further information you can visit their website at:
wildlife.ohiodnr.gov>nuisance-wildlife