

Suncor Responds to Fatal Bear Attack with Mandatory Wildlife Safety Training



In May, an oilsands worker in Alberta was attacked and killed by a black bear at Suncor Energy's base plant north of Fort McMurray while she was doing electrical work.

In response to this tragedy, Suncor recently announced that it's going to provide mandatory wildlife safety training for its oilsands workers in northern Alberta. The company had such training in place at the time but reviewed its training practices afterwards.

Wildlife training will be mandatory for all workers and contract employees in the Wood Buffalo region starting March 31, 2015. The level of training will vary, depending on where the employees work and what type of work they do. The training will include basic awareness training as well as knowledge on how to:

- Avoid encounters with black bears and other wildlife
- Understand bear behaviour
- Deal with an encounter
- Deploy bear spray, bangers and flare guns
- Deal with other wildlife, such as cougars, wolves or coyotes.

Suncor is also reminding workers to be diligent about reporting any wildlife encounters to its environmental affairs hotline so the company can notify other employees.

The oil and gas industry isn't the only one in which workers could be attacked by bears or other wildlife. All workers who work outside and especially those in the wilderness may be at risk of encountering wildlife.

If your workers are exposed to this risk, take appropriate steps to protect them from wild animals, such as bears, snakes, wolves and even bugs.