

Figure 1: Bear-resistant recycling, food scrap, and trash dumpsters at a Vermont State Park.

## Black Bear-Resistant Waste Containers Protect Your Customers and Vermont's Bears

Trash attracts bears in almost half of Vermont's reported bear-human conflicts. Bear-resistant trash and food scrap containers reduce human-bear conflicts and protect the safety of people and bears. When bears get into human-supplied food, they can associate people with food, which continues and sometimes escalates conflicts.

Whether you provide customers with dumpsters or rolling carts, or your customers provide their own, modifications can make them more bear-resistant. Certified bear-resistant latches, bins, and dumpsters are also available for purchase.

### Bear-Resistant Dumpsters

For a dumpster to be bear-resistant, it needs:

- ▶ **Metal or metal-reinforced lids and doors:** Install an all-metal lid or attach metal bars to plastic lids to reinforce the lid.
- ▶ **Locking mechanisms to tightly close all openings,** like clips, latches, lock bars, and locks. Lids and doors should close tightly with no gaps.
- ▶ Ideally, also provide **signage warning users about bears,** with **instructions to properly lock** or secure the **dumpster** after use.

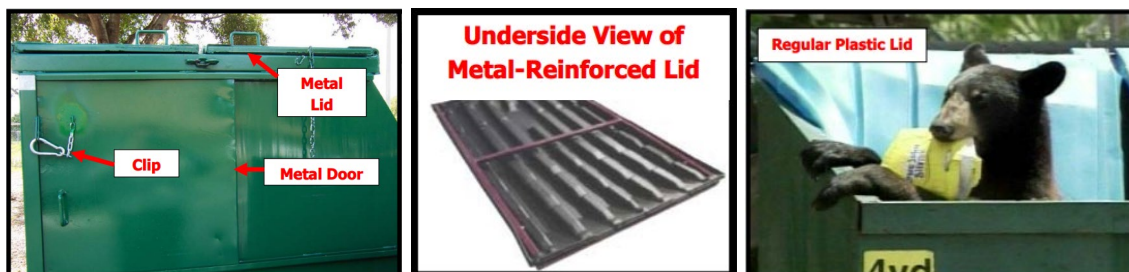


Figure 2: Bear-resistant dumpsters can have metal lids, doors, locks, and latches. Plastic dumpster lids can be reinforced with metal bars. Dumpsters with plastic-only lids are not bear-resistant, even if they have metal lock-bars. Photo credit: FWC



Figure 3: Bins are made bear-resistant with straps or clips.

## Bear-Resistant Trash Bins

Customers that cannot secure their trash or food scrap bins in a garage, basement, or sturdy shed may need bear-resistant bins to store their waste between pick-ups. **Some haulers provide bear-resistant containers to customers upon request, or they allow customers to add latches to their containers.** See the next section to learn where to purchase certified bear-resistant bins and carts, including bins compatible with automated curbside collection.

[TrashLockers.com](https://www.trashlockers.com) sells certified bear-resistant lock straps that can be bolted to sturdy bins. [BearWise](https://www.bearwise.org), an organization that helps people live responsibly with bears, offers a [guide to add latches to plastic trash cans](#) with a few simple tools and hardware. Find it here: [tinyurl.com/DIYBearResistantTrashBin](https://tinyurl.com/DIYBearResistantTrashBin)

## Buying Bear-Resistant Products

The [Wildlife Mangement Institute](https://wildlifemanagement.institute) maintains a list of **certified black bear-resistant products** at <https://wildlifemanagement.institute/bear-products/approved>. Some of these products work with automated curbside collection services.

The [Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee \(IGBC\)](https://igbc.org) maintains a list of **grizzly bear-resistant certified products** at <https://igbconline.org/programs/bear-resistant-products>. This list includes dumpsters, bins, and more.



Figure 4: Bear-resistant certified products undergo field testing.

## Tips for Customers

In addition to using bear-resistant trash bins, haulers can encourage customers to:

- Secure trash and food scrap bins in a garage, basement, or sturdy shed.
- Place an ammonia-soaked rag or sponge in a bucket next to the trash and food scrap containers or area. Keep the rag or sponge moist—resoak frequently.
- Wait until the morning of trash pick-up to put bins outside.
- Double bag trash to reduce odors.
- Regularly clean trash containers with a deoderizer like ammonia to reduce smells.

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