

BEAR CACHING

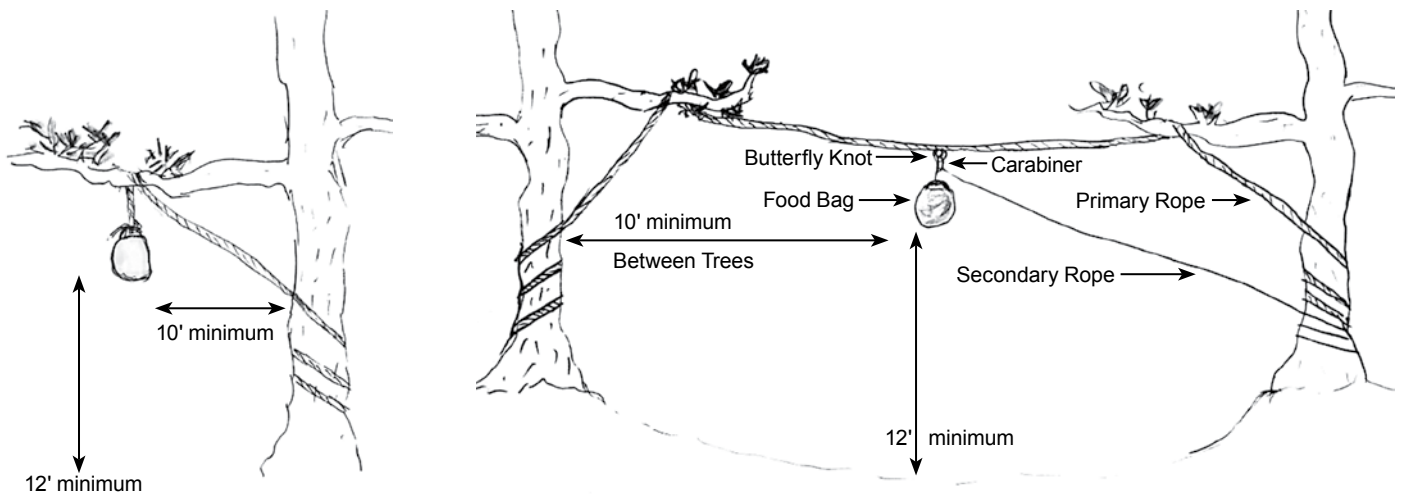
Joy Andersen, BC Camping Committee



The best way to avoid problems with bears and other creatures when camping is to keep a clean campsite. Food must be kept away from tents, so that bears are not tempted to come visiting. Cook and store food at least 100 metres from your campsite.

A cache is a system of food storage that keeps food out of the reach of bears and other animals. Food can be packed in a bag such as a stuff sack, and hung from trees a short distance from the campsite.

Caches should be hung approximately 3–5 metres (12 feet) off the ground, 2–3 metres (10 feet) from the tree trunk and 1 metre (3 feet) below any branches. Natural landscapes such as cliffs or depressions can help reach these measurements.



How to hang a cache from one tree:

1. Tie the end of the rope to a stick.
2. Wrap some of the rope around the stick to add weight.
3. Throw the stick over a sturdy tree limb. This is not as easy as it would seem—underhand tends to work best and practise is needed.
4. Tie the bear bag to one end of the rope.
5. Hoist the bag up so that it is 3–5 metres off the ground, and tie off the rope with three wraps around the trunk and then a knot. Wrapping the trunk adds friction and makes the rope more secure.

It is preferable to hang a cache between two trees, as this makes it easier to get both the distance from the tree and the height needed to keep out of reach of bears. Also, using a secondary rope, a butterfly knot and a carabiner makes hoisting the cache easier.

How to hang a cache between two trees:

1. As with a one-tree cache, throw the rope over a sturdy tree limb. Secure the rope to the tree trunk.
2. Using the other end of the rope, throw it over a second tree branch. Leave this primary rope loose between the trees.
3. Tie a butterfly knot in the primary rope at approximately the mid-point between the two trees.
4. Attach a carabiner to this loop and thread a secondary rope through the carabiner.
5. Being sure not to lose this secondary rope, tighten the primary rope and tie it off to the tree with three wraps and a knot.
6. Tie the bear bag to the secondary rope, hoist it to within one metre of the carabiner and tie it off to one of the tree trunks with wraps and a knot.

Following these easy steps will help keep your campsite safe and bear free, and your food supply secure!

