

Constructing Bear-resistant Waste Enclosures

Bears are incredibly strong, powerful animals. Their massive shoulders give them the ability to bend and pry metal, and break into structures and cars. Storing waste in an enclosed, sturdy structure is usually more of a deterrent to bears than storing waste outdoors in a plastic bear-resistant cart; however, building an enclosure that is impenetrable by a bear is difficult. Sturdy structures that have minimal gaps and openings are harder for bears to get into, making it less likely that a bear will expend the energy to break into and damage the structure.



Photo provided by Canshed

Bear-resistant Waste Enclosure Requirements for the Secure Trash Regulation Zone

One option for securing waste from bears is to store your trash and compost in a bear-resistant enclosure until it is collected directly from the enclosure by your waste hauler. Not all waste haulers that serve Boulder may offer this service, so please contact your waste hauler for information about the services offered.

The definition and criteria for a bear-resistant enclosure, as described in Rule 6-3-12.A(14), is:

A “Bear Resistant Enclosure” shall be an enclosed structure, made of metal, wood, stone, brick, concrete or the equivalently sturdy material, consisting of five (5) sides and a secure door or cover, which shall have a latching device of sufficient design and strength to prevent access by bears. A garage or other building that meets the foregoing criteria can be a “Bear Resistant Enclosure.”

Waste enclosures may not require a city permit to install, but enclosures that are designed to be fixed in place need to satisfy all applicable regulations of Title 9 of the Boulder Revised Code (B.R.C.) 1981. Examples of these regulations include: minimum setbacks, building separation, maximum building coverage, site triangles, etc.

In most residential zones, depending on the specific design of the trash enclosure, it may also contribute “floor area” toward the maximum allowed floor area ratio if the floor-to-ceiling height within the trash enclosure is greater than six feet. For more information about code regulations and requirements, contact a Project Specialist in Planning and Development Services with the specifications of your proposed enclosures so they can provide information specific to your property. Email plandevlop@bouldercolorado.gov or call 303-441-1880.

Bear-Resistant Enclosure Design Guidelines

The city ordinance does not specify design or hardware requirements; however, the following guidelines are based on structures that have been successful in deterring bears in other communities.

The sides of the structure should extend to the ground and the door should not have more than a two-inch gap along the bottom. The door must have a latching device of sufficient design and strength to prevent access by wildlife. Ventilation openings should be covered with a heavy gauge steel mesh or other material of sufficient strength to prevent access.

Other features include:

- Metal crossbars to latch the doors;
- Metal-framed wood doors for strength;
- Minimal gaps (ideally 3/8" or less); and/or
- Ventilation openings covered with metal mesh or material of sufficient strength to prevent wildlife access;

Examples of Enclosures

Not Recommended

The large gaps at the top and bottom allow bears to enter.



Recommended

Waste enclosures are not *required* to be bear-resistant certified, but this ***Canshed*** enclosure is produced in Boulder, has been tested with grizzly bears, and is certified bear-resistant.

Visit www.canshed.us.com for more information.



Recommended

An enclosed wood structure with minimal gaps around the doors and between the door and the ground. This structure has not certified as bear-resistant but meets the ordinance criteria.

