

How to avoid negative experiences with coyotes



Winter is mating season

The Eastern Coyote is common in urban areas throughout North America including Oakville. During the winter months, coyotes may be more visible as they look for food and shelter and seek a mate. You may hear yipping and howling during this time as they communicate with one another.

In the spring and summer, sightings may peak again when coyotes have pups.

Coyotes are not considered to be a significant risk to people, but seeing one on your property or while out for a walk can be unnerving. There are steps we can take to keep coyotes away from our backyards and neighbourhoods. Hazing is a method used to instill a fear of humans and lets the coyote know it is not welcome. Based on field work and experience, Coyote Watch Canada tells us that for communities experiencing regular coyote sightings, consistent hazing and participation by the entire community can encourage a coyote to stay away from people.

Keeping coyotes away from your property:

- Remove all food sources from your property.
- Do not allow bird seed to remain on your lawn.
- Plug gaps in fences and under decks and sheds.
- Do not leave pets unattended outside.
- Practice hazing on your property to deter the presence of animals. This can be done by making loud noises, flashing lights.

What to do if a coyote follows or approaches you while walking your dog:

- **STOP.** Keep dogs on a short leash. Pick up small dogs. Do not let your dog approach the coyote.
- **MAKE YOURSELF BIG.** Stand tall, wave your arms above your head. Surprise gestures work best.
- **BE LOUD AND ASSERTIVE.** Shout “Go Away!”, stomp your feet, clap your hands. Carry a noise maker such as a whistle or use a plastic bag to make a loud popping sound.
- **SLOWLY BACK AWAY.** Maintain eye contact and continue to be loud and assertive. Never run from a coyote (or stray dog).

Answers to your questions

What is the town doing?

The town works with Coyote Watch Canada to identify potential coyote hot spots and provide education to residents.

Municipal enforcement staff receive training from Coyote Watch Canada on hazing techniques and recognizing den sites. Parks staff continue to replace open garbage receptacles with wildlife-proof lidded bins where required.

Town staff monitor reports submitted through the coyote reporting form on oakville.ca to identify increased sightings in a particular area, injured coyotes, and behavioral changes allowing the town to employ resources from Municipal Enforcement Services, the Oakville Milton Humane Society and Coyote Watch Canada where appropriate.

What does it mean if I hear coyotes yip or howl?

Coyotes call to each other as a means of communication. They yip, howl and bark to defend territory, locate family, celebrate, warn each other of danger and greet one another. This can be increased during mating season when they are looking for a partner. If you hear coyotes communicating, maintain your distance and respect the coyote's space.

Dogs and coyotes

Most situations between coyotes and dogs occur when dogs are off-leash or appear to be off-leash. Monitor your dog when out in the yard. Keep your dog on a short leash when out for a walk, and if you know a coyote has been seen in your area, consider changing your walk schedule or route temporarily.

What more can I do?

- Share your experience. Report details of your coyote sighting online using the coyote reporting form on oakville.ca. This helps us learn what areas the coyotes are frequenting and if further investigations are required.
- Report infractions – such as food left out or overgrown properties – to ServiceOakville at 905-845-6601 or on the coyote reporting form on oakville.ca.
- Contact the Oakville Milton Humane Society at 905-845-1551 if you encounter a coyote you believe is sick or injured or in distress. If a coyote is captured, it will be sent to a wildlife rehabilitation centre for assessment, and are released only after receiving a positive behaviour and health assessment.
- Call 911 if a coyote poses an immediate threat to safety.
- Be informed. Learn more about coyote behaviour at coyotewatchcanada.com.

**For more information, visit oakville.ca or
contact ServiceOakville at 905-845-6601**