

## **Fatal Alert**

On September 14, 2018, a hunting guide was fatally injured while field dressing and processing an elk that had been shot by a hunter by bow the day prior. According to information collected, prior to processing the elk, the guide removed an automatic pistol and chest holster and left them with their packs a short distance up the hill from the carcass of the elk. During the processing of the elk, the two men heard rocks tumble and looked up the hill to see two charging bears, with the larger bear charging them and smaller bear remaining back.

The charging bear attacked the guide and the hunter ran uphill to retrieve the guide's pistol. The hunter did not take a shot for fear of hitting the guide and the larger bear charged the hunter and partially knocked him down. The bear then returned to the guide and the hunter attempted to throw the gun to the guide, with the gun landing short of his reach. The hunter then left the guide and ran up the hill to the horses to get his phone to call 911.

The hunter was rescued from the mountain while the search for the guide was suspended until the next morning. The body of the guide was located the afternoon of September 15, 2018. The cause of death was determined to be injuries from bear attack.

### **Significant factors.**

- Both men had bear spray, the guide carried his on his person but the hunter had his in his backpack
- The guide had removed both his shirt and handgun prior to starting the processing of the elk and left both with his pack a short distance up the hill
- The outfitter was following the required ratio of one guide to two hunters per the rules set forth by the Wyoming State Board of Outfitters
- No evidence that the elk had been claimed by the bears prior to the attack.
- A used can of bear spray was found near the attack site.

### **Recommendations**

- The employer should evaluate its operating procedures for bear country
- The employer should evaluate its training policy on bear spray use