It is possible to collect food scraps for a hauler without attracting nuisance bears.

**Tips for bear-proofing food scrap totes:**

1. **Minimize odors.** Bears have a strong sense of smell. To keep odors contained, cover food scraps with a thick layer of sawdust, straw, or another smell-capping compostable material. Ask your hauler what material they recommend.

2. **Keep things clean.** Ensure no food scraps spill on the ground or the outside of the tote.

3. **Store food scrap totes where bears cannot access them.** If space allows, store totes in a shed or garage, and bring them outside immediately before pick-up. Consider at least bringing totes inside at night, when bears are most active.

4. **Keep totes away from forest edges.** Most bears do not like to cross open areas, like yards and parking lots. Keeping totes near buildings may deter bears.

5. **Latch totes closed.** Locks, bungees, zip ties, or other latches can deter bears (and other animals) from getting inside totes. Make sure your hauler is aware of your latch system. These instructions explain how to install metal latches on plastic carts.

6. **If outside, strap totes to a tree or pole so they are harder to tip over.** This will help the latches hold.

7. **Surround totes with electric fencing.** Either top a wooden or chain-length fence with electric fencing or set up a ground-level electric fence. Consider baiting the electric lines with peanut butter or bacon grease; if a bear has a negative experience near your bin, it might be less likely to return.

8. **Install a motion-sensor alarm and/or light.** Bears may be deterred by bright lights and/or alarms that go off as they approach a tote. Some are solar and/or battery powered so they can be installed anywhere.

9. **Train staff.** Make sure all staff know the importance of following good practices to avoid attracting bears and what to do if a bear is spotted.

10. **If a bear is seen trying to get into a tote, try to scare it away** by banging pots together or shouting from a safe distance. If you are in a car, drive toward it (not too close!) slowly and blow the horn. Report all bear visits to VT Fish and Wildlife.

Contact VT Fish and Wildlife for more advice on deterring a bear before it becomes a problem. **Fill out this form to get in touch:**

Anrweb.vt.gov/FWD/FW/WildlifeBearReport.aspx