

Bear Break-Ins Lead To Ban On Latch Doorknobs

Experts: Round Doorknobs Harder For Bears To Open

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PITKIN COUNTY, Colo. -- The Pitkin County commissioners voted unanimously Wednesday to ban latch door handles on new construction and remodeled homes.

Bears are learning to operate those lever-action handles, and in some instances, the bears are learning how to operate car door handles, said Tyler Baskfield, communications manager with the Division of Wildlife.

"We have bears that just run around and slap lever-handled doorknobs until one opens," said Cindy Houben, head of Pitkin County's Community Development Department.

"Bears can't operate round style doorknobs because they don't have a thumb," explained Baskfield.

The regulations only affect new home construction, not people remodeling, according to Assistant Director for Community Development Lance Clarke. He said current homeowners will not have to retrofit their homes.

The regulations are not being added to the zoning rules, but are being added to the general wildlife standards, Clarke said.

The regulations now include the sentence: All outside doors shall utilize only solid round-handled door knobs, unless another type is required by the applicable building code for disabled accessibility purposes.