

HOW TO DEAL WITH AN ALLIGATOR NEAR YOUR BALL

1 Determine the size of the alligator.

Although even small alligators can cause injury, those less than four feet long are not as dangerous to humans. If the alligator is larger than six feet, be especially wary, as a bite can inflict major damage. Alligators larger than nine feet should be considered deadly.

2 Calculate the distance from the alligator to your ball.

The immediate danger zone is within 15 feet of an alligator.

3 Try to determine if the alligator sees your ball.

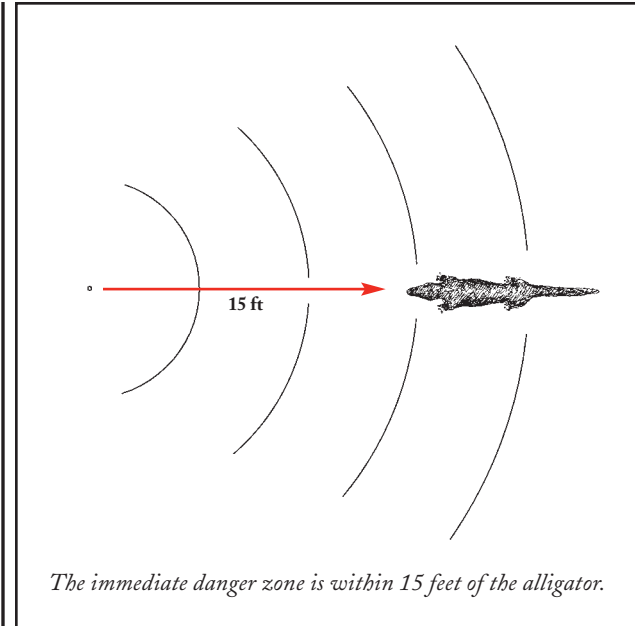
Alligators are attracted to objects that appear to be food. Golf balls look like alligator eggs, which alligators eat.

4 Do not stand between the alligator and water.

If disturbed, an alligator on land will seek refuge in water. Make sure the alligator is between you and any nearby water hazard.

5 Make a loud noise.

Alligators are sensitive to loud noises. Yelling or screaming may cause the animal to leave. If the alligator does not move, however, you will have gained its attention.



6 Use a ball retriever to recover the ball.

The alligator may lunge and bite at objects that invade its space. A telescoping ball retriever, best used when the alligator is not facing you or the ball, can quietly scoop up the ball. You can also use a flagstick, though you will have to use it to roll the ball out of the way.

7 Quickly move away from the alligator's territory.

After retrieving the ball, or if you encounter difficulties, run. While alligators can move fast, they generally will travel only short distances and probably cannot outrun an adult golfer.

Be Aware

- Alligators are common on golf courses throughout the Gulf Coast states in the United States, and can be found as far north as North Carolina. To be safe, assume that any body of water on a course in these states is home to an alligator.
- Never wade into a water hazard on a golf course known to be home to alligators. You are most likely to be attacked in or at the edge of water.
- Be especially wary during spring months, when alligators wander in search of mates, and during late summer, when eggs hatch. Mother alligators will respond aggressively to threats to their young, and any adult alligator may come to the aid of any youngster.
- An alligator more than nine feet long is likely to be male, and males tend to move around more and be more aggressive.
- Do not assume any alligator is safe to approach. While some animals may be habituated to the presence of humans, alligators are wild animals, and therefore unpredictable: they may attack without provocation.

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