

Rules for Visitors to the National Forests

As a visitor to the National Forests, you are asked to follow certain rules designed to protect the land and the natural environment, to ensure the health and safety of visitors, and to promote pleasant and rewarding outdoor experiences for all visitors. Forest Officers are empowered to enforce the Federal Regulations that the rules are taken from. Please take time to read and understand them.

When the need arises, Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors may issue orders that will close or restrict the use of certain areas. Such prohibitions will be posted so that National Forest visitors can reasonably be expected to be familiar with them. Copies of the orders will also be available at the offices of Forest Supervisors and District Rangers.

Information on all permit requirements is available from Forest Services office. If you have any questions or need help, please contact your nearest Forest Officer or visit the nearest Forest Service office.

Please remember to be careful! You are primarily responsible for your own [safety](#). Look out for natural hazards and dangers when you are in the forest. If you hike off trails or swim or dive in streams or lakes, you do so at **YOUR OWN RISK!**

Camping

- Use picnic sites, swimming beaches, and other day use areas only between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.
- Campgrounds and other recreation sites can be used only for recreation purposes. Permanent use or use as a principal residence without authorization is not allowed.
- In campgrounds, camp only in those places specifically marked or provided.
- At least one person must occupy a camping area during the first night after camping equipment has been set up, unless permission has otherwise been granted by the Forest Ranger.
- Do not leave camping equipment unattended in a developed recreation site for more than 24 hours without permission from the Forest Ranger. The Forest Service is not responsible for any loss or damage to personal property.
- Remove all personal property and trash when leaving.

Campfires

- Obey all restrictions on fires. Open fires may be limited or prohibited at certain times.
- Within campgrounds and other recreation sites, build fires only in existing fire rings, stoves, grills, or fireplaces provided for that purpose.
- Be sure your fire is completely extinguished before leaving. Do not leave fires unattended. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING FIRES UNDER CONTROL.**

Property

- Do not carve, chop, cut, or damage any live trees.
- Preserve and protect your National Forests by leaving natural areas the way you find them.
- Enter buildings, structures, or enclosed areas in National Forests only when they are expressly opened to the public.
- Native American, old cabins, and other structures-- along with all objects and artifacts associated with them--have historic or archeological value. Do not damage or remove any such historic or archeological resource.

Sanitation

- Throw all garbage and litter in containers provided for this purpose, or carry it out with you.
- Garbage containers, when provided, are reserved for the use of visitors to the National Forest, not visitors to or owners of private lands or lands under permit.
- Wash all food and personal items away from drinking water supplies. Use water faucets only for drawing water.
- Use toilets properly. Do not throw garbage, litter, fish cleanings, or other foreign substances in toilets and plumbing fixtures.

Operation of Vehicles

- Motorized vehicles are restricted to designated roads, trails, and areas.
- Obey all traffic signs. Specific state traffic laws apply to the National Forest unless otherwise specified.
- When operating any kind of vehicle, do not damage the land or vegetation, or disturb wildlife. Do not drive on unpaved roads or trails when they are wet or muddy.
- Within campgrounds and other recreation sites, use cars, motorbikes, motorcycles, or other motor vehicles only for entering or leaving, unless areas or trails are specifically marked for them. Park only in marked parking areas.
- Do not block, restrict, or interfere with the use of roads, trails or gates.

Pets and Animals

- Pets must always be on a leash while in developed recreation sites.
- Pets (except guide dogs) are not allowed in swimming areas.
- Saddle or pack animals are allowed in recreation sites only where authorized by posted instructions.
- All non-pelletized hay or straw must be tagged or marked certified as weed- or seed-free on each bail or container, or have original and current evidence of weed free certification. Marking must meet specific state and/or county standards for certification as weed free.

Fireworks and Firearms

- Fireworks and explosives are prohibited in National Forests. Only persons with a permit from the Forest Service may engage in these types of activities.
- Firing a gun is not allowed: a) in or within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site, or occupied area; b) across or on a road or body of water; c) in any circumstance whereby any person may be injured or property damaged.
- Motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or any mechanical transport are not allowed in Wilderness areas.

Fee Areas

- You must pay a fee to use certain sites and facilities. Such areas are clearly signed or posted as requiring a fee.
- Where fees are required, you must pay them before using the site, facility, equipment, or service furnished.

Public Behavior

- No fighting or boisterous behavior.
- Keep noise at a reasonable level. Please be considerate of fellow visitors.

Business Activities

- Permits are required for any commercial activity.

Audio Devices

- Operate any audio device, such as a radio or musical instrument, so that it does not disturb other visitors.
- A permit is required for operating a public address system in or near a campsite, developed recreation site, or over a body of water.