

# Visitor Safety

**BLM**



# BLM

# Public Lands

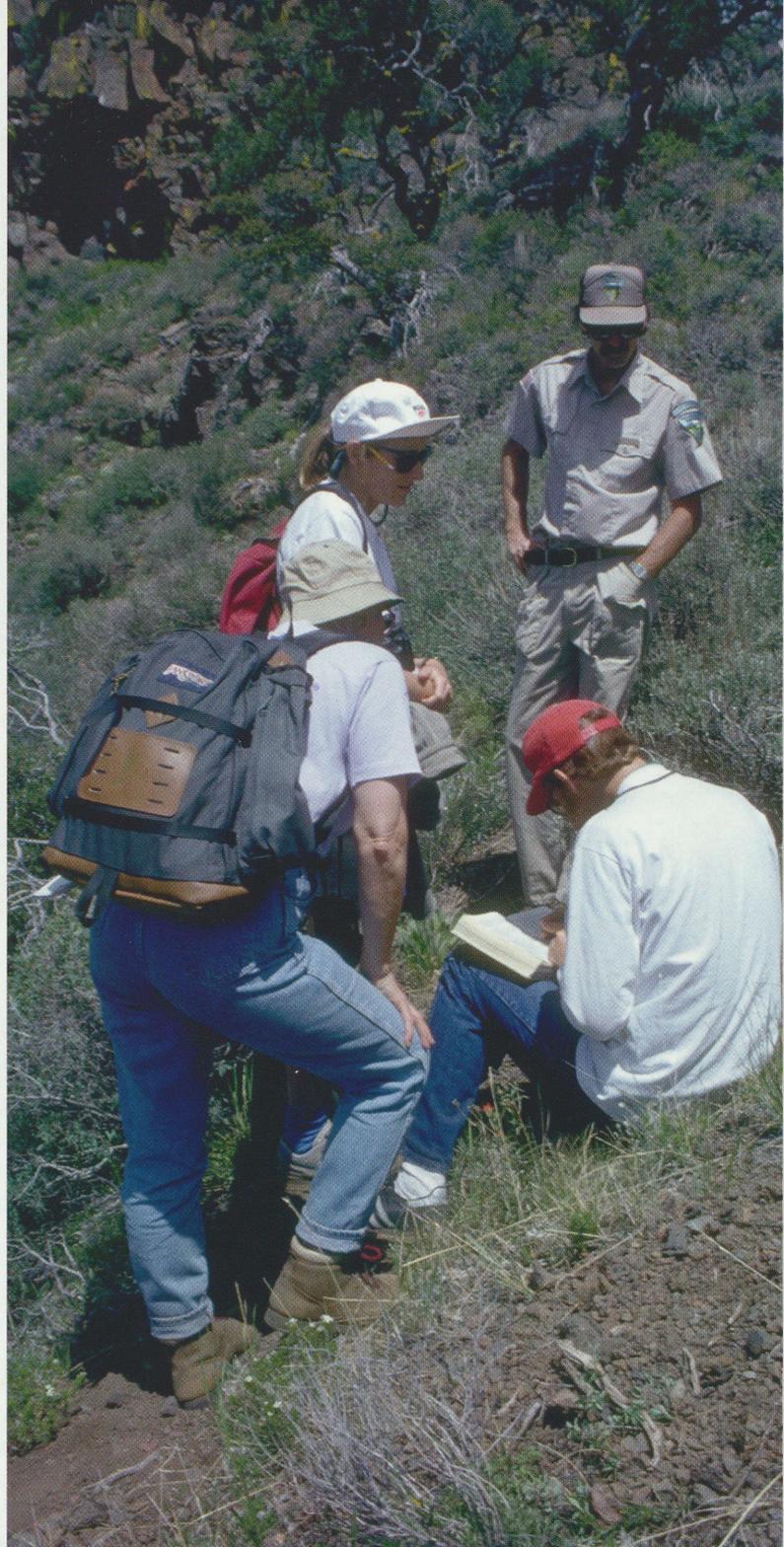


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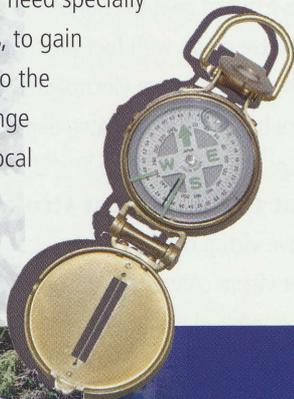
s a visitor to BLM public lands, you will have the opportunity to enjoy some of the country's most breathtaking natural beauty. From the forests of the Pacific Northwest to the deserts of the Southwest and the beach-front property on the Atlantic Coast, the majestic scenery is matched only by the wildlife that inhabits it. Public lands offer the visitor a broad range of opportunities for outdoor activities, including camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, and whitewater boating. The following general and activity-specific safety reminders will help ensure that your visit is a safe and enjoyable one.

## General Safety Reminders

- **Leave a trip schedule** to let someone know where you are going, when you will be back, the names of any companions, and vehicle information (color, model, license number).
- **Check the weather forecast** for your destination so you can dress appropriately, bring the proper equipment, and plan for driving conditions.
- **Dress appropriately** to protect against hypothermia or heat stroke. Hats can save body heat in the winter and protect you from the sun in hot weather. Layer your clothing to allow flexibility for changing weather conditions, hot or cold.
- **Bring the proper equipment** if you will be away from your vehicle for any length of time. **IT IS ESSENTIAL TO YOUR SAFETY!** Maps are available from your local BLM office.
  - Standard equipment should include a map of the area, a compass, sunscreen, and drinking water.



- Emergency equipment should include waterproof matches, flashlight, first aid kit, knife, extra food and water, and a light plastic tarp for shelter.
- If you are on medication, take along an adequate supply. Let any companions know about your condition. If you are allergic to bees, do not forget your bee sting kit.
- **Do not drink water from streams or lakes** as it may contain the *Giardia* microorganism. *Giardia* causes nausea, headaches, and diarrhea. Water can be purified by boiling, using filters, or tablets.
- **Know the road conditions** since you may be traveling on a number of unimproved roads, trails, or Back Country Byways. Be aware that you may need specially equipped vehicles, such as 4x4s, to gain access to some areas. Be alert to the weather, which can rapidly change road conditions. Contact your local BLM office for up-to-date road information.



## Activity-Specific Safety Reminders

### Camping

- Build campfires according to local regulations and BLM fire restrictions.
- Keep campfires contained inside a fire ring.
- Never start a fire with flammable liquids. It's unsafe and illegal.

- Use water and a shovel to properly extinguish your campfire.
- Ventilate your tent or RV when using catalytic heaters. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause death.
- Use hibachi-type cooking devices outdoors only.
- Use the garbage containers provided in most BLM campgrounds. Improperly discarded refuse attracts flies, insects, and animals. When no garbage containers are provided, the standard rule applies: "pack it in, pack it out."

### Hiking

- Wear proper hiking gear, especially footwear.
- Bring extra drinking water to make up for the additional dehydration from the physical exertion.
- Carry emergency gear in case you need to remain overnight in the backcountry.
- Know your limits. Pace yourself.
- Stay on the trails! Developed trails are provided for your convenience and safety, as well as the protection of resources.
- Stay where you are if you get lost. Save your energy and provisions. Let the rescuers find you!

### Hunting

- Wear proper hunting gear. Orange fluorescent clothing will make you more visible to other hunters.
- Carry emergency gear in case you need to remain overnight in the backcountry.
- Know your firearm: how it works and its capabilities. Always assume that all firearms are loaded.
- Hunt with a companion. It's safer. If you're injured or become ill, a companion can be a lifesaver.
- Know how to use a map and compass. It's essential!
- Be sure of your target and never fire until you can positively identify that target.
- Remember, alcohol and firearms don't mix!



## Fishing

- Use caution while fishing on riverbanks. Make sure the bank is stable.
- Use caution when wading in rivers and streams. Be aware of swift currents and slippery rocks.
- Always wear a personal flotation device when fishing from a boat.
- Don't overload the boat. Know the limits of the craft.
- Watch the weather. If high winds, thunderstorms, and waves begin, get off the water immediately.
- Never let children out of your sight near the water!

## Whitewater Boating

- Choose a river or river section that matches your skills and experience.
- Use proper equipment, such as adequate flotation for kayaks and canoes.
- Wear fastened and snug rafting gear, such as a personal flotation device, a helmet, if required, and protective footwear.
- Check for loose lines to avoid entanglement.
- Recognize and avoid hazards like trees, branches, rocks, dams, and bridge abutments.
- If you are out of your boat in whitewater, don't stand up; swim defensively with your feet up, using backstroke to maneuver. Once beyond hazards, swim aggressively towards calm water, shore, or raft.
- If in doubt, get out and scout! As a group, walk or carry your craft around danger spots.





## *Additional Safety Reminders*

Some of the more common health hazards that occur during outdoor activities include weather-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and hypothermia, and illnesses such as Lyme disease.

Weather can have a significant impact on outdoor activities. Check the weather forecast ahead of time and be aware of changing conditions. Being properly prepared can help you cope with hot and cold temperature extremes.

Deer ticks (*Ixodes*) are a common hazard found on public lands in some areas of the country. Deer ticks can transmit Lyme disease, which if let untreated, can become quite severe.

The following tips will help you prevent and recognize these illnesses and provide information on what to do should they occur. Remember that all symptoms are not necessarily present for you to be suffering from one of these conditions.

***Heat-Related Illnesses***, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke result from prolonged exposure to excessive heat. The body becomes overheated and cannot eliminate the excess heat. Heat stroke is an extremely serious condition that can be fatal or cause permanent damage. It is a medical emergency. The best way to avoid heat exhaustion and heat stroke is to pay attention to the following prevention tips.

### **Prevention of heat exhaustion and heat stroke**

- Acclimatize. Get used to hot weather in small increments.
- Take frequent breaks in shaded areas.
- Drink plenty of water continuously. Stay well hydrated!
- Don't drink alcohol or sodas. They can speed up dehydration.
- Eat. Food replaces electrolyte losses.
- Keep your head cool. Wear a hat or get wet.

## Symptoms of heat exhaustion

- Rapid, weak pulse
- Heavy sweating, pale skin
- Dizziness, nausea, chills
- Headache, vomiting, feeling light-headed

## Symptoms of heat stroke

- Elevated body temperature
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Red, hot, dry skin
- Nausea, dizziness, throbbing headache
- Unconsciousness may occur.

## What to do for heat exhaustion

- Stop activity or exercise.
- Move out of heat to cool or shaded place.
- Rest. Lie down with feet raised and clothing loosened.
- Rehydrate. Replace electrolytes.
- Cool bare skin with water, damp towel, or shower if possible.

## What to do for heat stroke

- Move victim out of heat.
- Wet victim continuously with cool water. Do not apply ice!
- Seek medical attention immediately!

**Hypothermia** is caused by a lowering of internal body temperature in cold weather or exposure to cold water. The cold overwhelms the body's ability to produce and retain heat.

## Prevention

- Be aware of changing weather conditions. Find warm shelter if necessary.
- Be prepared. Wear layered clothing and be sure to cover your head.

## Symptoms

- Shivering
- Cold, pale skin
- Slurred speech, loss of coordination
- Fatigue, lethargy, apathy

## What to do for hypothermia

- Get dry! Replace wet items with a warm, dry covering.
- Cover head and insulate victim from cold ground.
- Warm victim immediately, but gently and slowly. No aggressive rewarming.
- Apply heat packs to neck, chest wall, and groin.
- Do not give victim alcohol!
- Seek medical attention if a facility is readily accessible.

**Lyme disease** is a progressive, debilitating disease transmitted by deer ticks (*Ixodes*). If left untreated, it can become quite severe.

## Prevention

- Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and pants. Tuck shirts into pants and pants into boots.
- Use tick repellent.
- Know how to identify the deer tick.
- Inspect your clothes, head, and body thoroughly at the end of each day.
- Pay particular attention to armpits, behind ears, and navel and groin areas.

## Symptoms

- Rash or lesion
- General fatigue
- Fever, headache, stiff neck
- Muscle aches and joint pain

## What to do for Lyme disease

- Seek medical attention. Early treatment with antibiotics is the most effective.



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For more information, visit us at [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov)

*Your Safety Is Our Concern!*

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