

# **Danger** **in the** **national** **park** **system**

*Take a minute to read these simple,  
but important safety rules.  
Then go on to a pleasant experience  
in the national park system.*

*protect your park  
and yourself*

Your visit to one of the areas in the National Park System can be a most pleasurable and rewarding experience—or it can be a time of vexation, distress, or even tragedy. Much depends on how you and your family observe these simple rules and avoid hazards. Park regulations are designed to protect the natural beauty of the area and to provide for your safety, comfort, and convenience. The use of snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and fires, and the participation in such activities as fishing and swimming are governed by regulations that take into account local conditions and problems. Park rangers are here to help and advise you as well as to enforce regulations. If you need information or are in difficulty, see a park ranger. Complete regulations can be read in the superintendent's office.

*don't  
swim alone*

Be alert for underwater obstructions, and when swimming at national seashores, be wary of tidal currents. Never swim or dive alone; always take a friend. Stay within rescue distance of another person and within protected or guarded areas, and always let someone know exactly what you intend to do. Know your capabilities and stay within them. Don't take chances.

*register  
your boat*

In all parks where boating is permitted, safety regulations are strictly enforced. Ignoring such rules will not only place your vessel in jeopardy but will endanger your life and the lives of others. You must register your boat with park authorities, and you must meet certain safety standards. It is well worth a few moments to familiarize yourself with the rules.

*heed fishing  
regulations*

There is relatively little danger in fishing in any of the parks except in deep water and rapids. Follow posted signs and warnings, and obey park fishing regulations, which, in most cases, are in accordance with State regulations.

*be cautious  
of thermal pools*

In thermal pool areas, stay on the trails or boardwalks at all times. The boiling heat is deadly. Keep children under restraint. Leave pets behind.

*drive carefully*

Park roads were deliberately designed for slow-moving vehicles. Stop at overlooks; don't try to see everything from behind the wheel. Be a considerate driver and watch out for those who are not.

*dress properly*

Even in the heat of summer it is often cool in the mountainous parks. If you are

*watch  
your children*

hiking on rough terrain, be sure to wear sturdy shoes or boots. Some swamp and forest areas are plagued with mosquitoes. An advance check with park employees about protective clothing and repellents will help prevent problems.

Don't let children stray. Your knowledge, experience, and wisdom cannot help a child who is beyond your protective reach and warning voice.

*respect wildlife*

Most parks are the natural home of numerous wild animals. *You* are the intruder. Before starting out on your park adventure, find out where the animals are and what to do in the event you come face to face with one of them. As a rule, wild animals need only to be left alone. Be alert for reptiles.

*Bears* are dangerous—particularly when accompanied by young. It is reckless to approach bears closely. Even though they may appear tame, bears may turn suddenly and inflict serious injury. Do not feed, tease, frighten, or molest them in any way; such acts are violations of park regulations. On foot, give all bears a wide berth. If one approaches your car, stay inside with the windows closed. In a park inhabited by grizzlies, read the warnings carefully. Observe all precautions recommended for back-country travel and camping.

*Poisonous snakes* are found in all States but Alaska, Hawaii, and Maine. Know which ones are found in the parks you are visiting, and learn what precautions to take to avoid being bitten. Generally it is a matter of knowing what habitat they occupy, and then keeping alert. Seldom does a snake bite unless disturbed or molested.

*don't  
travel alone*

Two heads are safer than one. Whether it's a short hike in the woods or a month-long climb, a companion may save your life in an emergency.

*preserve natural,  
historical features*

While "preserving" yourself, help preserve the park's natural life and historical properties. Destruction, injury, or disturbance of plantlife, wildlife, or other natural and historical features is strictly prohibited. Permits are required to collect specimens.

*keep the nps  
informed*

Notify park headquarters of your plans to explore. Mountain climbing, hiking, or horseback riding in remote areas, exploring caves or lake bottoms, and numerous other enterprises can be dangerous even for experts. If park rangers know your plans,

they can alert you to hazards, watch for your return, and, if necessary, organize rescue efforts. Telling them your plans could save your life.

*enjoy  
your visit*

Whether you are here to view the wonders of nature, to tread in the footsteps of history, or simply to get out and have fun, the National Park System is intended for your enjoyment and the enjoyment of generations to come. Enjoy your visit.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.



National Park Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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