

The Leave No Trace Recommendations for Getting Outside During Covid-19

The coronavirus pandemic has altered all of our lives. The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics aligns with the [CDC recommendations](#) to help slow the spread of the virus. Let's keep ourselves, our communities and our natural world healthy.

1 You and Your Outdoor World

You may be asking: *Can I go for a hike or walk on the beach right now?* Your personal vulnerability, the health of others in your community, access to local and uncrowded spaces and more play into this decision. Then there are communities and states with either lockdown, shelter in place or stay at home mandates. Where Covid-19 is spiking, it may not be possible to get out at all, so pay close attention to guidance in your community before heading outside. Then follow physical distancing guidance, meaning staying at least six-feet away from anyone not living with you.

2 Expect Closures

As businesses limit services or direct their staff to work remotely, closures should be expected. The result could be a lack of water, restrooms, campgrounds, or other facilities—or even entire areas closed to the public. Many experts are recommending that you refrain from using public restrooms and other open facilities at all right now. Take necessary precautions like bringing extra food and water, learning how to go to the **bathroom outdoors**, and being ready to pack all your trash out with you.

3 Pack Out Your Trash

With limited staff and services likely in many parks and protected areas, trash and recycling receptacles may not be emptied as often as normal or at all. This can result in trash overflowing from receptacles which becomes litter and can harm wildlife. Instead, pack your trash and recyclables out with you all the way home and utilize your own receptacles.

4 Avoid Times and Places of High Use

Absolutely avoid crowded parks, trails, and beaches. Physical distancing applies in the outdoors just as it does anywhere else. To avoid being part of the creation of large crowds and groups at popular outdoor areas, spread out to less popular spots, and avoid times of highest use if possible. **Follow guidelines at [usa.gov/state-health](https://www.usa.gov/state-health) about group size restrictions.**

5 Proceed With Caution

Keep in mind that as our healthcare system becomes more overwhelmed, it's important to reduce potential accidents that would add to the stress on first responders and medical professionals. As much as possible, stick to activities and areas that are within your regular routine and take it easy.

6 Don't Forget the Leave No Trace 7 Principles

Just because times are tough, doesn't mean the Leave No Trace **7 Principles** fly out the window. Our outdoor spaces will likely be receiving less attention from staff and volunteers right now. This means our shared spaces need us to act as stewards more than ever. Remember, it is still just as important to prepare for spring weather conditions, stick to trails, dispose of our waste properly, minimize fire impacts, leave what we find, keep a safe distance from wildlife, and generally do your best to eliminate impacts.

7 Be Considerate and Kind to Other Visitors

We are all in this together. Be considerate of others in the outdoors by ensuring that you practice physical distancing. Be particularly kind to park staff during these challenging times. Help them do their job by doing your part to take care of each other and our beloved outdoors.

We will see
you out
there on the
other side!



**REGIONAL CLOSURE ORDER
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION**

DEVELOPED RECREATION SITES

Pursuant to 16 USC 551 and 36 CFR 261.50(a), and to provide for public safety, the following act is prohibited on National Forest System lands under my jurisdiction within the Rocky Mountain Region.

Entering or using a Developed Recreation Site or portion thereof, including developed trailhead facilities. 36 CFR 261.58(b).

All trails, trailheads, and parking facilities remain open. Trail users must adhere to social distancing and [COVID-19 prevention](#) orders and guidelines issued by local, state and federal authorities while using trails. Trail users should be prepared for limited or no services such as restroom facilities and garbage collection and must pack out all trash and human waste.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.
2. Persons with a Forest Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order, Form FS-7700-48, specifically exempting them from the effect of this Order.

This prohibition is in addition to the general prohibitions contained in 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart A.

DEFINITION

Developed Recreation Site means an area which has been improved or developed for recreation. 36 CFR 261.2.

Developed trailhead facilities means amenities OTHER THAN PARKING FACILITIES, including but not limited to restrooms, day use areas, and picnic tables, BUT NOT TRAILS OR TRAILHEADS.

This Order shall remain in effect until May 31, 2020, or until rescinded, whichever occurs first.

Done at Lakewood, Colorado, this 7th day of April, 2020.

Jennifer Eberlien
Regional Forester
Rocky Mountain Region

A violation of this prohibition is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both. 16 USC 551 and 18 USC 3559, 3571, and 3581.

**FOREST ORDER
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION**

FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 551 and 36 CFR § 261.50 (a) and (b), the following acts are prohibited on all National Forest System lands administered as National Forests or National Grasslands within the Rocky Mountain Region (Region 2) of the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service in the States of Colorado, Kansas, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

This Regional Order is supplemental to and does not rescind or replace those restrictions at 36 C.F.R. § 261 Subpart A, and/or any Forest Supervisor Order issued under 36 C.F.R. § 261 Subpart B. The purpose of this Order is to protect public health, safety, and natural resources by preventing wildfires, as Firefighting and Law Enforcement resources are limited, during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has been declared a National Emergency.

National Forests (“NF”) and National Grasslands (“NGL”):

COLORADO

Arapaho & Roosevelt NF
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre,
and Gunnison NF
Routt NF
Pike & San Isabel NF
Rio Grande NF
San Juan NF
White River NF
Comanche NGL
Pawnee NGL

KANSAS

Cimarron NGL

NEBRASKA

Nebraska & Samuel R. McKelvie NF
Oglala NGL

SOUTH DAKOTA WYOMING

Black Hills NF
Buffalo Gap NG
Fort Pierre NGL

Bighorn NF
Medicine Bow NF
Shoshone NF
Thunder Basin NGL
Black Hills NF

PROHIBITIONS: This Order prohibits the following acts in the Areas listed above:

1. Igniting, building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, including charcoal grills and barbecues, coal and wood burning stoves, and shepherd’s stoves. 36 CFR §261.52(a).
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle, trailer, or building. 36 CFR § 261.52(c).

EXEMPTIONS:

Pursuant to 36 CFR § 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from specified Prohibitions of this Order:

1. Persons with a Forest Permit, Form FS-7700-48, specifically exempting them from the

effect of this Order in the areas listed above.

2. Any Federal, State or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty is exempt from Prohibitions.
3. Persons using pressurized liquid or gas devices (stoves, grills or lanterns) with shut-off valves in an area at least three feet from any flammable materials are exempt from Prohibition #1.
4. Residents, owners or lessees within the areas listed above who are using a fire in a permanent dwelling with an effective and properly installed USDA- or SAE- approved spark arrestor, are exempt from Prohibition #1.

Notice regarding Exemptions: Holders of valid Forest Service permits, leases and authorizations and all other persons are on notice that when proceeding with activities that are authorized pursuant to these Exemptions, such persons are responsible for conducting authorized activities in a safe and prudent manner using extra precautions and are electing to proceed at their own risk. An exemption does not absolve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for damage, injury or loss to the United States for any fire started while undertaking the exempted activity.

This Order will be in effect from 12:01 am on April 7th, 2020 and will remain in force until May 31st, 2020 or until rescinded, whichever event occurs first.

Executed in Lakewood, Colorado this 7th day of April, 2020.

Jennifer Eberlien
Regional Forester
Rocky Mountain Region

A violation of the prohibitions in this Order is punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both. (16 U.S.C. § 551 and 18 U.S.C §§ 3559 and 3571).