

Expectations and Advice

Personal Safety:

We will spend most of the trip in remote areas far from medical help. Please take care of yourself and watch out for those around you. Let the staff know of any injuries or needs immediately.

Heat: Drink plenty of liquids (especially gatorade-type drinks) and salty foods, and keep your hat on. If you get headaches, cramps, or feel dizzy, get to some shade and cool off. **Heat exhaustion** is indicated by cold clammy skin, disorientation, and general weakness. Lay down in the shade, apply a wet washrag, and drink sparingly. Lay off of vigorous activities for the rest of the day.

If you miss or ignore the signs of heat exhaustion, it can quickly lead to **heat stroke**, a life-threatening emergency. The signals of **heat stroke** include red, hot, dry skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. You must cool the victim immediately, and keep an eye out for breathing problems. Get medical assistance as soon as possible.

Seat Belts: You and the driver of the van are liable if you are caught without them. For your own safety and out of courtesy to your driver, please keep them on whenever the vehicles are moving.

Hiking Safety: Many of our hikes are across open country, and sometimes in fairly dangerous terrain. Always hike in groups of three (if one is hurt, another can attend to him/her while the third goes for help). Don't do anything that you are uncomfortable with, i.e. climbing steep rocks, etc. If you don't have a map or can't read one, stay with someone who does and can.

Critters: See the separate handout about bears.

Rattlers are overrated as a wilderness danger (about 8,000 bites, but only 10 fatalities, occur each year in the U.S.), but we have seen several over the years (no one has ever been bitten yet). If you are bitten, stay calm, wash and immobilize the bitten area and seek help. If there are signs that poison has been injected, and medical help is more than 30 minutes away, than consider using a snakebite kit to suction the wound.

Few scorpion species are actually deadly, and most stings are about like those of a wasp. Wash the wound and apply a cold pack, and watch for signs of an allergic reaction.

Wilderness Ethics: The lands we will pass through are sacred, and worth protecting. These wonders of nature have suffered abuse in the past, and face even worse abuses in the future. We must do all we can to minimize the effect of our presence in these wilderness areas. We have managed to maintain a good rapport in our dealings with park officials, locals and others over the years, and this is kind of unusual for college level geologists. Please help us keep our reputation intact!

Rocks, Fossils, Minerals and Artifacts: We will have numerous opportunities to collect many kinds of beautiful and interesting specimens. But please don't collect from national parks and monuments. It is illegal, and unsporting. Human artifacts are absolutely irreplaceable, and should never be collected, even outside of any parklands. Leave them for others to enjoy. Where rock or fossil collecting is legal, please take only as much as you feel you need.

Trails: Most parks do not have adequate funds for park upkeep, so trails often cannot be maintained. Please do not cut switchbacks, take shortcuts, or knock rocks onto trails. Please pick up any trash that you see.

Camp Facilities: Again, maintenance budgets are tight, so please make every effort to keep the camps we stay at in good condition. Pick up any garbage or trash, and haul washwater to the bathrooms instead of dumping it onto the ground.

And finally, **Personal Sanity!:**

Please keep quiet in camp after 10:00 or so. You will be expending huge amounts of energy every day, and you will need the sleep. The next day starts very early.

We cannot stop at every single landmark, and some remarkable scenery will pass by the van windows every day. **Stay awake during the day!** Follow the roadguides whenever possible, and ask questions about the things that you see. This will enrich your trip considerably.

Please keep your appointments with K.P. duty. If you really want to be somewhere else, then trade with someone and make sure they show up. Fair is fair. And please, practice **good sanitation** at all times, and remember, the **cook's word is law!**

Upon arising in the morning, **please pack your gear first**, then make breakfast and lunch. **Everybody needs to help load the gear into the vans.** An early start means no missed adventures!

Everyone goes through moments of depression and grouchiness. Remember the adage of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. Give those folks their space, but be supportive, too. If there are problems, come talk to me or the other staff members. Bad hair days? Well, there's nothing much we can do about that. . .

Bears (From Glacier National Park Information):

A commonly asked question is "What do I do if I run into a bear?" There is no easy answer. Like people, bears react differently to each situation. The best thing you can do is to make sure you have read all the suggestions for hiking and camping in bear country and follow them. Avoid encounters by being alert and making noise. Bears may appear tolerant of people and then attack without warning. A bear's body language can help determine its mood. In general, bears show agitation by swaying their heads, huffing, and clacking their teeth. Lowered head and laid-back ears also indicate aggression. Bears may stand on their hind legs or approach to get a better view, but these actions are not necessarily signs of aggression. The bear may not have identified you as a person and is unable to smell or hear you from a distance.

Bear Attacks

Almost 2 million people visit Waterton-Glacier yearly, and it seems that one or two bear attacks occur each year. The vast majority of these occur because people have surprised the bear. In this type of situation the bear may attack as a defensive maneuver.

If you surprise a bear, here are a few guidelines to follow that may help:

- Talk quietly or not at all; the time to make loud noise is before you encounter a bear. Try to detour around the bear if possible.
- Do not run! Back away slowly, but stop if it seems to agitate the bear.
- Assume a nonthreatening posture. Turn sideways, or bend at the knees to appear smaller.
- Use peripheral vision. Bears appear to interpret direct eye contact as threatening.
- Drop something (not food) to distract the bear. Keep your pack on for protection in case of an attack.
- If a bear attacks and you have pepper spray, use it!
- If the bear makes contact, protect your chest and abdomen by falling to the ground on your stomach, or assuming a fetal position to reduce the severity of an attack. Cover the back of your neck with your hands. Do not move until you are certain the bear has left.

In rare cases bears may attack at night or after stalking people. This kind of attack is very rare but can be very serious because it often means the bear is looking for food and preying on you. If you are attacked at night or if you feel you have been stalked and attacked as prey, try to escape. If you can not escape, or if the bear follows, use pepper spray, or shout and try to intimidate the bear with a branch or rock. Do whatever it takes to let the bear know you are not easy prey.

Camping and Bears:

Odors attract bears. Our campground and developed areas can remain "unattractive" to bears if each visitor manages food and trash properly. Regulations require that all edibles (including pet food), food containers (empty or not), and cookware (clean or not) be stored in a hard-sided vehicle or food locker when not in use, day or night.

Keep a clean camp! Improperly stored or unattended food may result in confiscation of items and issuance of a Violation Notice. Inspect campsites for bear sign and for careless campers nearby. Notify a ranger or warden of potential problems. Place all trash in bearproof containers. Pets, especially dogs, must be kept under physical restraint. Report all bear sightings to the nearest ranger or warden immediately.

Hiking in Bear Country:

Don't Surprise Bears!

Bears will usually move out of the way if they hear people, so make noise. Most bells are not loud enough. Calling out or clapping hands loudly at regular intervals are better ways to make your presence known. Hiking quietly endangers you, the bear, and other hikers.

When bears charge hikers, the trail may be temporarily closed for public safety. While the trail remains closed, other visitors miss the opportunity to enjoy it. A bear constantly surprised by people may become habituated to close human contact and less likely to avoid people. This sets up a dangerous situation for both visitors and bears.

Don't Make Assumptions!

You can't predict when and where bears might be encountered along a trail. People often assume they don't have to make noise while hiking on a well-used trail. Some of the most frequently used trails in the park are surrounded by excellent bear habitat. People have been charged and injured by bears fleeing from silent hikers who unwittingly surprised bears along the trail. Even if other hikers haven't recently seen bears along a trail section recently, don't assume there are no bears present.

Don't assume a bear's hearing is any better than your own. Some trail conditions make it hard for bears to see, hear, or smell approaching hikers. Be particularly careful by streams, against the wind, or in dense vegetation. A blind corner or a rise in the trail also requires special attention.

Keep children close by. If possible, hike in groups and avoid hiking early in the morning, late in the day, or after dark. Do not hike alone.

Don't Approach Bears! Never intentionally get close to a bear! Individual bears have their own personal space requirements which vary depending on their mood. Each will react differently and their behavior can't be predicted. All bears are dangerous and should be respected equally.