

Safety Site

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Doing Recreational Activity takes Responsibility and Control

Safe Hiking

Fall has long been my favorite season for hiking. Sunny days without the heat of summer and colorful foliage add to the joy of being outside on a mountain trail. However, be aware that the days keep getting shorter. Before starting, know what time the sun is going to set. Check your watch when you hit the trail, so that you know when to turn back in time to reach your car before dark.

Also check the weather and dress in layers. This is even more important if you are not familiar with that trail. Always carry a flashlight, even on a day hike, because an injury or losing your way can delay your return to your car. If you become lost, you could be out overnight, so be sure to carry a jacket, snacks, and extra water in your backpack.

Here are some quick tips to help you be safe while hiking:

- Carry a light and whistle on every hike, even short, day hikes.
- Carry and drink plenty of water (a minimum of 1 quart every 2 hours). Stay hydrated.
- Bring extra water if you have a dog with you.
- Wear sturdy footwear with good traction.
- Minor/moderate health or medical issues can be easily exacerbated by hiking up the steep valley trails—know your limits and pay attention to how you are feeling.
- Stay on the established trail.
- When hiking in a group, each member of the group should carry some water and food in case the party becomes separated, and the group should plan for where to meet up (at the vehicle, at the trailhead, etc.) if the members become separated.
- Stay away from rapid waters and slippery slopes.
- Avoid hiking alone. Have a plan and inform someone of where you are going and your plan to return.
- Eat well prior to starting so you have a good energy supply.
- Stay on the trail. If you need it, ask someone for HELP.
- Familiarize yourself with the area by using Google Maps on your smartphone. If you are “old school”, bring a paper map and compass. :-)

- Expect changes in the weather
- Respect fire regulations.
- Walk single file and stay right for faster hikers or bicyclists to pass.
- Leave no trace & clean up after pets and don't leave the poop bag on the trail.

Courtesy (in part) of Yosemite National Park