

Forest Rules You Need to Know



These regulations have been made by the Secretary of Agriculture to assure the enjoyment of recreation in the National Forests. They are common sense rules meant to control actions that cause damage to natural resources and facilities, as well as actions that cause unreasonable disturbances for National Forest visitors.

The Secretary of Agriculture's regulations (36 CFR 261) provide in part for regulating the occupancy and use of developed recreation sites. A violation of these regulations is subject to a penalty of not more than \$500 or 6 months imprisonment, or both.

DEFINITIONS

In the following definitions, which appear in 36 CFR 261.2, apply to all regulations quoted in this publication.

"Campfire" means a fire, not within any building, mobile home, or living accommodation mounted on a motor vehicle, which is used for cooking, personal warmth, lighting, ceremonial, or esthetic purposes. "Fire" includes campfire.

"Camping" means the temporary use of National Forest System lands for the purpose of overnight occupancy without a permanently fixed structure.

"Camping equipment" means the personal property used in or suitable for camping, and includes any vehicle used for transportation and all equipment in possession of a person camping. Food and beverages are not considered camping equipment.

"Damaging" means to injure, mutilate, deface, destroy, cut, chop, girdle, dig, excavate, kill, or in any way harm or disturb.

"Developed recreation site" means an area which has been improved or developed for recreation.

"Forest development road" means a road wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving a part of the National Forest System and which has been included in the Forest Development Road System Plan.

"Forest development trail" means a trail wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving a part of the National Forest System and which has been included in the Forest Development Trail System Plan.

"Forest Officer" means an employee of the Forest Service.

"Person" means natural person, corporation, company, partnership, trust, firm, or association of persons.

"Permission" means oral authorization by a Forest Officer.

"Permit" means authorization in writing by a Forest Officer.

"State Law" means the law of any State in whose exterior boundaries an act or omission occurs regardless of whether State law is otherwise applicable.

"Stove fire" means a campfire built inside an enclosed stove or grill, a portable brazier, or a pressurized liquid or gas stove, including a space-heating device.

PROHIBITED

The following represents a partial listing of acts prohibited on recreation sites on the National Forests. All the regulations are published in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations and copies of the same are on file at all Forest Supervisor and District Ranger Offices. Other regulations may apply. For current information, contact your local Forest Service office.

SANITATION

- Depositing in any toilet, toilet vault, or plumbing fixture any substance which could damage or interfere with the operation or maintenance of the fixture. (261.11a)
- Possessing or leaving refuse, debris, or litter in an exposed or unsanitary condition. (261.11b)
- Placing in or near a stream, lake, or other water any substance which does or may pollute a stream, lake or other water. (261.11c)
- Failing to dispose of all garbage, including any paper, can, bottle, sewage, waste water or material, or rubbish either by removal from the site or area, or by depositing it into receptacles or at places provided for such purposes. (261.11d)
- Dumping of any refuse, debris, trash, or litter brought as such from private property or from land occupied under permit, except, where a container, dump or similar facility has been provided and is identified as such, to receive trash generated from private lands or lands occupied under permit. (261.11e)
- Cleaning or washing any personal property, fish, animal, or food, or bathing or washing at a hydrant or water faucet not provided for that purpose. (261.14c)
- Depositing any body-waste except into receptacles provided for that purpose. (261.14q)

OPERATION OF VEHICLES

- Placing a vehicle or other object in such a manner that it is an impediment or hazard to the safety or convenience of any person. (261.10f)
- Failing to stop a vehicle when directed to do so by a Forest Officer. (261.10l)
- Blocking, restricting, or otherwise interfering with the use of a road, trail, or gate. (261.12d)
- Operating or parking a motor vehicle or trailer except in places developed or designated for this purpose. (261.14m)
- Operating a bicycle, motorbike, or motorcycle on a trail unless designed for this use. (261.14n)
- Operating a motorbike, motorcycle, or other motor vehicle for any purpose other than entering or leaving the site. (261.14o)

CAMPING

- Occupying between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. a place designated for day-use only. (261.14e)
- Failing to remove all camping equipment or personal property when vacating the area or site. (261.14f)
- Placing, maintaining, or using camping equipment except in a place specifically designated or provided for such equipment (261.14g)

- Without permission, failing to have at least one person occupy a camping area during the first night after camping equipment has been set up. (261.14h)
- Leaving camping equipment unattended for more than 24 hours without permission. (261.14i)

BUILDING FIRES

- Leaving a fire without completely extinguishing it. (261.5d)
- Building, attending, maintaining or using a fire outside a fire ring provided by the Forest Service for such purpose or outside a stove, grill, or fireplace. (261.14b)

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

- Cutting or otherwise damaging any timber, tree, or other forest product, except as authorized by permit, timber sale contract, Federal law or regulation. (261.6a)
- Damaging any natural feature or other property of the United States. (261.9a)
- Removing any natural feature or other property of the United States. (261.9b)
- Digging in, excavating, disturbing, injuring, destroying, or in any way damaging any paleontological, prehistoric, historic or archaeological resource, structure, site, artifact or property. (261.9g)
- Removing any paleontological, prehistoric, historic, or archaeological resource, structure, site, artifact or property. (261.9h)

PUBLIC BEHAVIOR

- Engaging in fighting. (261.4a)
- Addressing any offensive, derisive, or annoying communication to any other person who is lawfully present when such communication has a direct tendency to cause acts of violence by the person to whom, individually, the remark is addressed. (261.4b)
- Make statements or other actions directed toward inciting or producing imminent lawless action and likely to incite or produce such action. (261.4c)
- Causing public inconvenience, annoyance, or alarm by making unreasonable loud noise. (261.4d)

PETS AND ANIMALS

- Bringing in or possessing an animal other than a seeing-eye dog, in a developed recreation site unless it is crated, caged, or upon a leash not longer than six feet, or otherwise under physical restrictive control. (261.14j)
- Bringing in or possessing in a swimming area an animal, other than a seeing-eye dog. (261.14k)
- Bringing in or possessing a saddle, pack, or draft animal, except as authorized by posted instructions. (261.14l)

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

- Selling or offering for sale any merchandise or conducting any kind of work activity or service unless authorized by Federal law, regulation, or special use authorization. (261.10c)

AUDIO DEVICES

- Operating or using in or near a campsite, developed recreation site, or over an adjacent body of water without a permit, any device which produces noise, such as a radio, television, musical instrument, motor or engine in such a manner and at such a time so as to unreasonably disturb any person. (261.10h)
- Operating or using a public address system, whether fixed, portable, or vehicle mounted, in or near a campsite or developed recreation site or over an adjacent body of water without a special use permit. (261.10i)

FIREWORKS AND FIREARMS

- Discharging a firearm or any other implement capable of taking human life, causing injury, or damaging property: (1) in or within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site, or occupied areas, or (2) across or on a Forest development road or a body of water adjacent thereto, or in any manner or place hereby any person or property is exposed to injure or damage as a result of such discharge. (261.10d)
- Discharging or igniting a firecracker, rocket or other firework, or explosive. (261.14d)

INTERFERING WITH A FOREST OFFICER

- Threatening, resisting, intimidating, or interfering with any Forest Officer engaged in or on account of the performance of his or her official duties in the protection, improvement, or administration of the National Forest System. (261.3a)

ABANDONED PERSONAL PROPERTY

- Abandoning any personal property. (261.10e)

OTHER PROHIBITED ACTS

- Constructing, placing, or maintaining any kind of road, trail, structure, fence, enclosure, communication equipment, or other improvement on National Forest System land or facilities, without a special use authorization, contract, or approved operating plan. (261.10a)
- Occupying any portion of the site for other than recreation purposes. (261.14a)
- Use or occupancy of National Forest System land or facilities without special use authorization when such authorization is required. (261.10j)

Additional rules may be established at individual developed sites where determined necessary by the Regional Forester or the Forest Supervisor.

Such rules will be established by an order that is posted in such locations and manner as to reasonably bring the prohibition to the attention of the public.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.