



Know Before You Go

Preparing to Visit a National Forest

Illegal Activities

Advance preparation can help ensure that outdoor activities are as safe and enjoyable as possible. However, it's difficult to predict the behavior of other forest visitors. As is possible in a public place, visitors might encounter someone who is angry, intoxicated or armed. Being cautious of strangers is always appropriate. No place is immune from illegal activity. Suspicious behavior might lead to automobile break-ins, marijuana cultivation or attempted arson.



If you witness or experience any suspicious activity, immediately call local law enforcement. Do not attempt to address the situation yourself. The safety of forest visitors is top priority. The U.S. Forest Service does not tolerate threats or acts of violence against visitors or employees.

Safety Checklist

- Always be aware, alert and cautious. Some visitors have different agendas, which may include drug production, theft, arson or illegal acts.
- Back away from any people who appear to be angry, intoxicated or otherwise out of control.
- Keep children, pets and personal property away from anyone or any situation that appears to be suspicious. Caution is the best policy.
- Notify law enforcement officials of any suspicious behavior or situation.
- Marijuana plots and methamphetamine labs, while rare, could be found in remote locations. Persons responsible for illegal crops or labs are dangerous and should be avoided.
- How to identify plots: A typical cultivation site consists of 1-2 camping/sleeping areas, 3-15 plots that are separated by a few yards or up to half a mile, and a trail system leading to their supply "trailheads." The camping and sleeping areas may be spread over 1-2 acres, the "growing areas" 10-20 acres, and the "constrained area" (including trailheads) up to 50 acres .
- Chemicals used to grow and produce these illegal products can be highly combustible and pose considerable risk to people. Many are explosive or pose the risk of chemical burns if inhaled or if the material touches bare skin.
- If you inadvertently come upon a suspicious site, leave the area immediately. Go to a safe place and call 911. Report the encounter to law enforcement authorities.

Safety Checklist: Car Theft

- ❑ **Lock your car.** As simple as this seems, many people still forget.
- ❑ **Don't leave your travel plans on the windshield of your car.** Thieves use this "window of opportunity" to break in, since they know you may not be nearby. Leave your plans with the district office or someone at home, like a neighbor, relative or friend. Include what trails you plan to hike and an estimate of your return time.
- ❑ **Don't leave valuables inside your car.** If you must leave valuables, hide them from view or lock them in the trunk.
- ❑ **Don't park your car with the trunk backed toward the woods.** This provides cover for someone trying to break into your trunk. If your car has been vandalized, contact local law enforcement officials

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