



Tonto NF OHV Permit FAQ

The new Tonto National Forest (NF) Off-Highway Vehicle Special Recreation Permit (OHV Permit) is required for motorized vehicle access in the Bulldog Canyon, The Rolls, St. Clair, and Desert Vista OHV Permit Zones **beginning January 1, 2025**. The Lower Sycamore OHV Permit Zone will also require a permit once all National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements have been met, exact date of implementation still to be determined.

Permit options available include:

3-Day Permit	\$10
6-Month Permit	\$60
Annual Permit	\$80

One OHV Permit covers access to all 4 OHV Permit Zones. Every motorized vehicle in a Tonto NF OHV Permit Zone (i.e. ATVs, UTVs/SxSs, dirtbikes, Jeeps, SUVs, full-size vehicles, etc.) must have at least one rider in possession of a Tonto NF OHV Permit, issued in their name as listed on their Driver's License. For youth under 16 years of age operating an OHV in the OHV Permit Zones, they do not need their own permit but must be accompanied by a guardian with a Tonto NF OHV Permit.

An individual can have their permit saved digitally on their electronic device or print the permit after completing the purchase, but the permit must be available to show a law enforcement officer if asked. Be mindful of your device's battery power; if using the Recreation.gov app, cell service is not required to display a copy of the permit.

Vehicles parked in staging areas do not need a Tonto NF OHV Permit. Camping is not allowed in staging areas. Non-motorized uses (i.e. hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, etc.) in the OHV Permit Zones does not need a permit unless the activity requires motorized vehicle use beyond the staging areas.

All vehicle operators are required to stay on designated routes, as displayed on the maps. The maps are provided on the Recreation.gov permit page, the Tonto NF website, and displayed on the kiosks at each access point. Traveling off-trail, damaging resources, or violating any other laws, rules, or regulations may result in citation and revocation of the permit. Be sure to check out the Arizona Game and Fish Department's (AZGFD) website for a list of current OHV regulations (<https://www.azgfd.com/off-highway-vehicle/>).

Q: How do I get a Tonto NF OHV Permit?

A: Permits are purchased at www.recreation.gov or on the Recreation.gov app by searching "Tonto National Forest OHV Permit." Log in or create an account and select the length of time you want a permit for (3-Day, 6-Month, or Annual). After filling in your information and completing the order, you will receive two emails; one confirmation email with a receipt, and a second email with an attached copy of the permit. The second email will also contain helpful links to maps of the permit

zones and a list of rules and regulations of the areas. Failure to follow these rules or stay on the designated routes identified on the maps may result in citation or revocation of your permit.

Q: Can I purchase a Tonto NF OHV Permit on-site and do I need cell service?

A: At most access points and all staging areas, the Scan & Pay option is available via a QR code on the information kiosks to purchase the 3-day permit only. You do not need cell service to obtain the 3-day permit, however, you do need to have the Recreation.gov app on your device and it is helpful to have already downloaded the app when you have cell coverage or internet. All three permit options, the 3-day, 6-month, and annual permit are available to purchase online or on any electronic device when in an area with cellular coverage or internet. Most entrances have cell coverage and network providers are actively increasing coverage in the OHV areas.



Q: Can I purchase a Tonto NF OHV Permit at the District Offices or in town?

A: No, permits are only available at www.recreation.gov or on the app. Due to a growing demand for the Tonto NF's OHV areas and current and expected staffing limitations at the District Offices, we are unable to provide this service at our offices. Online access to the OHV Permits makes them more readily available throughout the week, day or night. Recreation.gov's call center is available every day from 10am – 12am EST at (877) 444-6777 should you have an issue completing a transaction (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day).

Q: Is my Tonto Pass, Discovery Pass, or Interagency Pass accepted in the Tonto NF OHV Permit Zones?

A: No, this is a unique Special Recreation Permit for OHV areas, unlike the passes mentioned above. These OHV Permit Zones are managed for motorized recreation identified in the Tonto NF's Travel Management Plan and the funding collected from the permit will go towards improving and maintaining motorized recreation opportunities in these areas with high visitation and demand.

Q: Are discounts, waivers, or fee free days offered?

A: At this time, senior, veteran, disabled, or Interagency Pass discounts are not offered for this Special Recreation Permit. Volunteer waivers are offered for individuals that have accumulated at least 40 volunteer hours in Tonto National Forest OHV areas or adjacent public lands where projects contributed to OHV recreation (i.e. State Parks, BLM, etc.). Volunteers must provide documentation of logged volunteer hours. Contact your local Volunteer Coordinator for more information on volunteer opportunities and details about volunteer waivers related to the Tonto NF OHV Permit.

The Forest currently honors 5 National Fee Free days: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, National Get Outdoors Day, Juneteenth, National Public Lands Day, and Veterans Day. Motorized vehicle use in the OHV Permit Zones would be allowed on National Fee Free days without paying a fee, however, visitors would still be expected to follow all rules and regulations of the permit zones.

Q: Does my AZ State OHV Decal count towards the Tonto NF OHV Permit? Why do I need both?

A: First, let's clarify which vehicles need an AZ State OHV Decal (for the most up-to-date information, visit <https://www.azgfd.com/off-highway-vehicle/>). All resident and non-resident OHVs designed by the manufacturer primarily for use over unimproved terrain and that weigh 2,500 pounds or less are required by law to display a valid AZ State OHV decal to operate on public and state trust lands in Arizona. This includes "street legal" vehicles that meet these two requirements. By this definition, AZ State OHV Decals are not required for vehicles whose primary use is for city roads and highways. Thus, most full-size vehicles are not contributing towards the State OHV Program.



AZ State OHV Decals are a state program and the National Forests (federal) can apply for this funding through grants. Grant funding for OHV related projects can be obtained by the National Forests through a competitive grant process, and approval is never guaranteed for Tonto National Forest projects and proposals.

Within the Tonto NF OHV Permit Zones, every motorized vehicle (i.e. ATVs, UTVs/SxSs, dirtbikes, Jeeps, SUVs, full-size vehicles, etc.) must have at least one rider with a valid OHV Permit issued in their name. Purchasing your Tonto NF OHV Permit helps maintain and improve these recreation areas where Tonto NF funding has otherwise been unsustainable, unreliable, and underfunded.

Q: Do I need a gate combination to access the Tonto NF OHV Permit Zones?

A: No. Prior to 2025, the Bulldog Canyon OHV Permit Zone was managed by a permit system that gave you the gate combination for 6 months to access the Permit Zone. The new Tonto NF OHV Permit system and OHV Permit Zones do not have locked gates; you do not need gate combinations and do not need to open/close the gates at most access points. Currently the Bulldog Canyon Blue Point and Userly access points have closed gates at the entrances but they are not locked; please simply close these gates behind you after you drive through. These gates will remain in place until cattleguards or other barriers can be installed to prevent the horses from entering the highway.

Q: How will I know if I'm in an OHV Permit Zone if there's no gates?

A: The entrances are clearly marked with improvements such as piperail and information kiosks. Signage will indicate you are entering an OHV Permit Zone and you need a Tonto NF OHV Permit for motorized vehicle use to proceed beyond the staging area (if applicable).

Q: I own two different dirtbikes and I alternate which one I bring to the OHV Permit Zones. Do I need to buy two Tonto NF OHV Permits to cover both dirtbikes?

A: No; as long as you're only bringing one dirtbike at a time to the Tonto NF OHV Permit Zones, then you only need one permit. If your friend borrows your second dirtbike and you both ride together, then your friend should purchase a Tonto NF OHV Permit to cover their motor vehicle use in the Permit Zones.

Q: I have both a full-size SUV and a quad that I want to do some trail-riding in the Tonto NF OHV Permit Zones. Do I need two permits to cover both vehicles?

A: If you park the SUV at the staging area and unload the quad to be the only vehicle you're riding in the OHV Permit Zones (where the SUV stays at the staging area), then you would only need one

permit for the quad. Alternatively, if you drive the SUV and quad into the OHV Permit Zone with the intent to ride both the SUV and the quad on the trails at the same time with different operators, then you would need two permits, one issued to each operator.

Q: I'm going camping with my family. There's 6 of us going and we're bringing one truck towing a toyhauler and 2 quads. Everyone is over 16 years old and will take turns riding the quads. We're not parking in the staging area (there's no camping allowed in the staging areas). How many Tonto NF OHV Permits do we need?

A: Any person over the age of 16 that will be operating the quads would need their own permit, issued to them in the name displayed on their Driver's License. A permit would also need to be issued to someone for the truck pulling the toyhauler; this can be issued to any of the 6 individuals riding in the truck.

This is a great example of when the 3-day permit comes in handy. Multiple 3-day permits can be purchased under one person's Recreation.gov account (you can fill-in each person's name for their permit). When completing the transaction, you can select to email each permit to each individual for their records.

Q: I'm going camping in an OHV Permit Zone with an RV for 7 days. Do I need an OHV Permit?

A: Yes, you need an OHV Permit for motor vehicle use in the OHV Permit Zone for the duration of your stay. Note there are many areas where camping is prohibited, such as staging areas, and the remaining areas of the OHV Permit Zones have a 14 day stay limit.