

Safety Alert: Crossing Glacial Streams & Rivers

Most glacial rivers crossings on Mt. Hood National Forest do not have bridges!

Hikers should be prepared for dangerous river conditions and conditions that could change quickly. Follow the recommended safety procedures before attempting any river crossing.

- **Avoid hiking alone** when crossing glacial streams.
- **Check the local weather** before your trip. Avoid these trails if storms or heavy rain are predicted.
- **Plan crossings for early morning**, when glacial rivers are lower.
- **Be willing to turn back** if conditions appear unsafe. **Red flags include:**
 - Fast water
 - Difficulty determining depth
 - Very cold temperatures
 - Water higher than your knees
 - Downstream hazards like waterfalls
 - The sound of boulders rolling along bottom
- **Scout up and down for the safest crossing location**, which may not be the trail crossing. Look for gradual banks, shallow water free of obstructions, and similar downstream conditions.
- **Keep your pack on, but undo the hip and chest strap.** Remove the pack if you lose footing.
- **Wear boots, sneakers, or water sandals** for foot protection and ankle support.
- **Use a hiking stick** as a third leg, especially on the upstream side and to scout for drop offs.
- **Cross together.** Face upstream and get in a line perpendicular to the stream's flow. Grab the person's shirt in front of you and move sideways one foot at a time, feeling for a stable surface before transferring your weight. Two people can also face each other holding arms and move sideways.



Option 1: Moving sideways



Option 2: Facing each other

