

Protecting Your Children

To keep your children safe in the forest—

- Know where your children are at all times.
- Make sure your children know the rules about strangers.
- Make sure your children know what to do if they become separated from you.
- Use extra precautions regarding your child's personal safety



Preventing Personal Assault

While in the forest, most of us relax and leave our worries at home. Unfortunately, criminals may use the fact that you are relaxed against you. To protect yourself—

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings and other people in the area.
- Stand tall and walk confidently. Don't show fear.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave right away and get help if necessary.
- Be observant of others and use discretion in acknowledging strangers.
- Avoid confrontations.
- Be respectful of your fellow outdoor enthusiasts. Always use good manners when interacting with others.
- Carry a cell phone if coverage is available in the area.
- Know how to contact law enforcement or other assistance.
- Carry a noisemaker, such as a whistle, or other protective device that you have been trained to use.
- Do not pick up hitchhikers.
- Never go anywhere alone! It is safer to be in pairs or a group.

Reacting, If You Are a Victim

You should be safe and have a wonderful time when you visit your national forests or grasslands. Unfortunately, crimes against persons and property do occur, however rare that may be. After a crime has occurred—

- Try to stay calm.
- Write down as much information on the suspect as possible, including personal and/or vehicle description and the last known direction and method of travel.
- Contact the local Sheriff's Office or USDA Forest Service Law Enforcement office immediately!!
- Preserve, but do not handle, any evidence of the crime.



Contact Numbers

911 (Where service is provided)

Sheriff's Office –

USDA Forest Service Law Enforcement –

Other Law Enforcement –

Emergency Medical Assistance –



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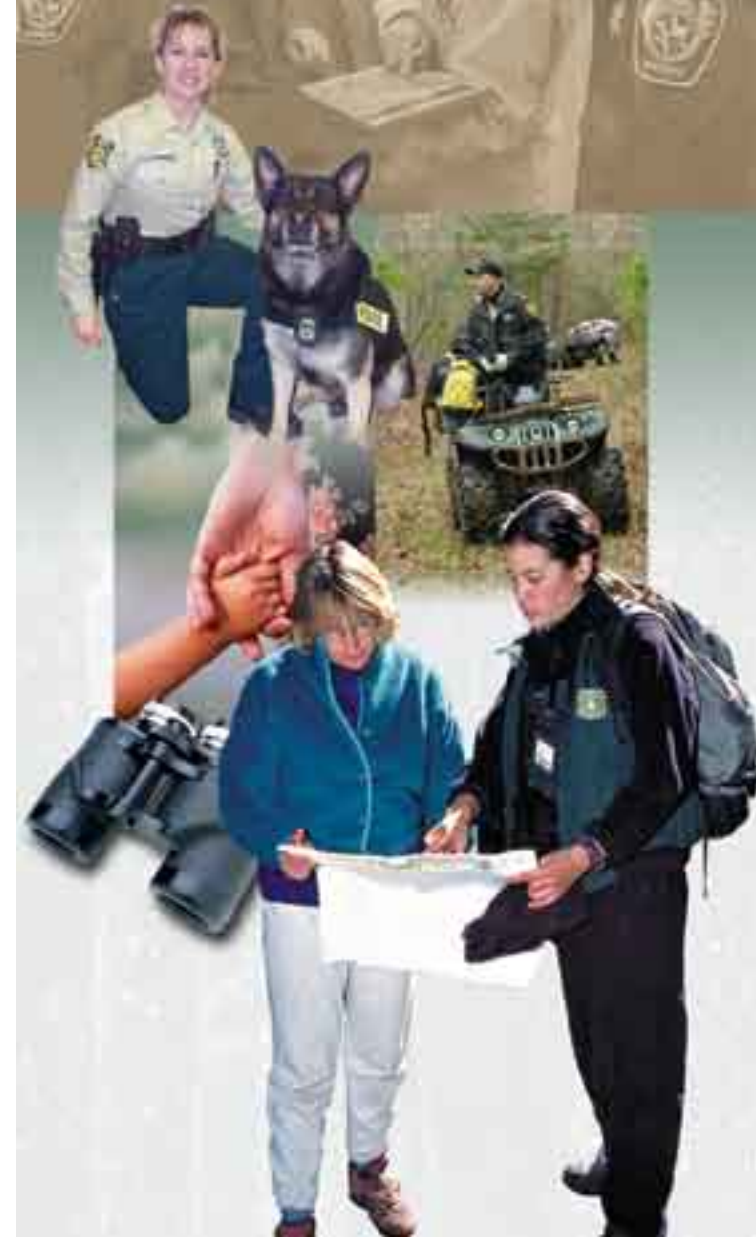


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Preventing Crime in Our National Forests and Grasslands



Visiting your national forests and grasslands can be

a wonderful experience. You may enjoy recreating

in a developed campground, walking on a trail, fish-

ing a stream, collecting rocks, enjoying off-highway

vehicle trails, or appreciating the view from an overlook.

Whatever your activity, chances are there may be other

people in the area. Although most people are there to

enjoy the national forest or grassland, some are not.

This brochure is intended to give you precautionary

guidelines to help prevent crimes from occurring while

you visit your national forest or grassland. These

guidelines should make you less vulnerable to the

criminal actions of others.

This brochure is a collaborative crime prevention effort between the National Sheriffs' Association and the USDA Forest Service.

Applying the “Neighborhood Watch” Concept



One of the most effective ways to prevent crime and reduce fear is to become involved in Neighborhood Watch. You can apply the Neighborhood Watch concept to the forest setting by being vigilant, by protecting yourself and securing your property, and by acting as an extra set of “eyes and ears” for reporting crimes and suspicious activity you may encounter. Remember, when you visit the National Forest System, it is your neighborhood—

- Know how to contact law enforcement and other emergency services personnel.
- Keep an eye out for the well-being of your fellow forest visitors and the safety of their property.
- Be observant of others and their activity.
- Keep an eye out for persons or vehicles that appear out of place or suspicious in or near campgrounds, recreation areas, trailheads, or rest areas.
- Report suspicious persons!
- Report criminal activity immediately.

Preparing To Visit the National Forest System



Before you visit a national forest or grassland, get information and be prepared in case you have an unplanned overnight trip. Precautions include—

- Obtain a map of the area you are visiting.
- Become familiar with the area; contact the local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service office for specific information.
- Tell a friend where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Make sure your vehicle is in good running condition and has plenty of fuel.
- Be prepared in case you get stranded; take extra food and warm clothing.
- Be prepared for the night; have a flashlight.
- Obtain the contact numbers for the USDA Forest Service law enforcement office and the local sheriff's office.
- Carry identification or your name, phone number, and blood type information on your person.

Parking Your Vehicle



Whether you park your vehicle at the campground where you are staying, at a trailhead, or at another location, it will be left unattended for a few hours or a few days. To help protect your vehicle and your valuables—

- Lock your valuables in the trunk or other location where they cannot be seen.
- Lock your vehicle. Do not hide your keys on or near your vehicle.
- Note other vehicles in the area. Write down license plate numbers and descriptions of vehicles that appear suspicious or out of place in the area where you park.
- Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or Forest Service personnel as soon as possible.

Protecting Your Property



Precautions to protect your property include—

- Do not carry more cash than you will need.
- Leave unnecessary valuable items at home.
- Do not make yourself a target by dangling your purse or showing your wallet.
- If someone attempts to rob you, give up your property; it is less valuable than your life.
- When leaving a campsite, lock valuables away.

Discovering Illegal Activity



Some people may use National Forest System lands to conduct illegal activity. For example, polyvinyl chloride pipes or hoses may indicate an active marijuana garden, or household chemicals in an unusual combination used in conjunction with glassware and tubing may indicate methamphetamine production. If you come across illegal activity—

- Do not approach or confront the individuals present at the site; do not in any way indicate that you are suspicious of their activities!
- Immediately leave the area along the same route you entered.
- Watch for other people in the area.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times. In some instances, potentially dangerous devices or harmful materials might be nearby. Make every effort to avoid contact with suspicious packages and/or equipment; they might be highly volatile.
- When you are safely away, write down a detailed description of the activities taking place, the area, the people, and any vehicles.
- Immediately report the activity to local law enforcement or Forest Service personnel.