Be Safe Out There!

High Elevation Requires Special Preparation

Most of the trails located here are between 9,000 and 11,000 feet. The high elevation that makes these trails so picturesque can also present serious challenges to all types of trail users.

It’s Harder to Breathe!

Sometimes the most fit trail users, if not acclimated to the high altitude, find themselves winded after a hike, even over relatively flat terrain. Persons with chronic respiratory or cardiac problems are advised to be extra cautious and assess their own abilities when considering hiking or other strenuous activities at high elevation. Some people are susceptible to “altitude sickness,” and can experience headaches and nausea. The best treatment for any of these symptoms is to move to a lower altitude.

Prevent Sunburn

Ultraviolet light exposure is about 50% greater at this altitude. Sunburn can occur very rapidly, particularly at mid-day. Snow reflects up to 80% of the UV rays and further increases risk. Wear sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen and UV protective lip balm when hiking, and replenish sunscreen frequently to protect yourself.

Plan for the Unexpected

High mountain environments have unexpected and unpredictable weather events. While most summer days are clear, weather can change quickly and temperatures can drop drastically, even in mid-summer. Mountain thunderstorms can bring sudden cold, strong winds, rain, snow, or hail, and dangerous lightning. Check the forecast before your hike and dress accordingly, and ALWAYS plan for cold and/or wet weather in the mountains, even if not in the forecast. Go prepared with a hat, warm jacket, and a shell layer for protection from rain and wind.

Seek Shelter in a Storm

The safest place to be in a lightning storm is inside an enclosed building or inside a closed vehicle. If lightning is striking within five miles of your location, head for shelter and do not stay in open, exposed areas. Make sure you’re not the highest object in an area, and do not seek shelter under a tree if it’s the highest object around.

Hydrate or Die

Because the air at higher elevation is cooler, visitors often do not drink enough fluids, simply because they don’t feel “hot and thirsty.” In reality, you may be unaware that your body is losing water from deep or more rapid breathing at altitude, and from unnoticeable perspiration that quickly evaporates into the dry air. Always bring plenty of water with you.

Watch Your Footing!

Most trails in the Brian Head area are in a natural setting and are not highly developed. This means you will find naturally occurring hazards such as rocky and uneven surfaces, loose material on trails, steep grades, precipitous drop-offs, and exposed cliff edges. Wear sturdy hiking shoes and watch your step!

Don’t Forget the “Ten Essentials”

To ensure they are equipped to deal with unforeseen circumstances, well prepared trail users complete their daypack with the following “ten essentials” while traveling in the remote areas:

- **NAVIGATION** – A good map, compass, and/or GPS unit and the skill and knowledge to use them
- **INSULATION** – A warm jacket or sweater
- **ILLUMINATION** – A good headlamp or flashlight
- **NUTRITION** – Enough high-carbohydrate food to get you through an extra day – energy bars, granola, trail mix, nuts, etc.
- **HYDRATION** – You can last for days without food, but not long without water
- **SUN PROTECTION** – Sunglasses, sunscreen, lip balm, and a wide-brimmed hat
- **FIRST-AID KIT** – At a minimum, basic trauma supplies
- **FIRE** – Matches in a waterproof container, a lighter, or some other means of starting a fire in an emergency
- **TOOLS** – A good pocket knife or multi-tool
- **EMERGENCY SHELTER** – A space blanket, plastic tube tent, or even an extra large plastic trash bag