

Safe Hiking and What to Do if Lost

Hiking on highways and roads (be seen!)

- Single file on the left side (facing traffic)
- Wear light colored clothing
- At nighttime strips of white cloth or reflective ribbon around right arm & leg; or wear fluorescent vest
- Use a flashlight to see and be seen better
- Never hitchhike!

Hiking on trails and cross country

- Stay on the trail
- Use bridges to cross streams; wade through water only if there is no other way; water should be shallow and current not too swift
 - Unfasten hip belt on backpack before crossing

If it's not safe or you feel uncomfortable with the danger, go back.
Safety is always more important than reaching a destination on a hike.

If lost . . .

The best way to not get lost is to always know where you are.

- If you think you are lost: STOP
 - **S**tay calm – sit and calm down, drink water, relax; the worst thing to do is to panic or get frightened
 - **T**hink – try to remember the way, get out a map
 - **O**bserve – look for clues (footprints, landmarks, etc)
 - **P**lan – If you are fairly sure of your route to a known location, move carefully, leave trail markers (e.g. broken branches, piles of stones) so you can return to your original spot if you don't know where you end up
- If you don't know where you are, stay put; people will be looking for you
- Universal distress call – signal repeated 3 times (e.g. whistle)
- Smoky fire during day (toss grass or green leaves on a fire), bright fire at night
- Spread bright colored clothing or equipment in an open area that can be seen from the air
- Flash a mirror in the direction of an aircraft
- Make yourself comfortable, you can survive for several days without water
- Bottom line – stay put. You will be found.