



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
RIDGECREST FIELD OFFICE



CAMPING ON PUBLIC LANDS

GENERAL INFORMATION: Great backcountry camping opportunities can be found throughout the Public Lands administered by the Ridgecrest Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These primitive campsites are located in a wide variety of environments from the wide open Mojave and Great Basin to the foothill canyons of the Sierra Nevada Desert Mountains. These sites are widely dispersed, undeveloped and are generally not signed as campsites. You can locate a dispersed campsite by looking for an area at the end of a spur road or a pullout that is clear of vegetation and has a hard compacted surface. These sites may or may not have a rock fire ring. You won't find any picnic tables or restrooms at these sites, but you will find one of the best ways to experience the vast and open wildlands of the California Desert.

DISPERSED SITES: The general policy of the BLM is to allow dispersed camping on all of the lands it administers with the following conditions and exceptions:

- Camping is **permitted** for up to 14 days at any one site. After this time period, you must relocate to another site at least 25 miles away.
- Camping is **prohibited** within 600 feet of any developed water source such as guzzlers or watering trough so that the water is accessible to wildlife and stock.
- A campfire permit may be required. Contact the Ridgecrest Field Office prior to your camping trip if you plan on having a campfire. Never leave your campfire unattended—you may be held liable for fire suppression costs if your fire gets out of control.
- When using a motorized vehicle for camping access within a Limited Use Area, limit your parking and vehicle based camping to no more than 300 feet from an established road or 50 feet from the road within a Desert Wildlife Management Area (Red Mountain-Cuddeback Lake area). Within Open Use Areas (Spangler, Olanca, Jawbone and Dove Springs OHV Areas) there is no distance from route restriction.
- Camping is **permitted only at designated campsites** within the Rand Mountain-Fremont Valley Management Unit and within Sage, Horse and Cow Heaven Canyons in the Jawbone-Butterbredt ACEC.
- Camping is **prohibited** within the Bedrock Springs ACEC, Red Mountain ACEC and within the White Mountain ACEC.
- Camping is **permitted** within all units of the National Wilderness Preservation System administered by the Ridgecrest Field Office. However, motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment are prohibited.

CAMPSITE USE: Many dispersed campsites are beginning to show signs of impact from heavy use. Campers can lessen their impact on the desert by adopting the following Leave No Trace minimum impact principles:

- **Plan Ahead and Prepare** - Get to know the regulations and special concerns.
- **Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces** - Use existing routes and trails and when possible camp at previously used sites. Camp at least 200 feet from all streams and springs.
- **Pack It In, Pack It Out** - Pack out your trash and a little extra.
- **Properly Dispose of What You Can't Pack Out** - Deposit human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp or trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- **Leave What You Find** - treat your cultural heritage with respect. Leave all artifacts as you find them.
- **Minimize the Use and Impact of Fires** - Use a lightweight stove for cooking. If you do build a fire, keep it small and only use dead and down wood. You will find that firewood in arid environments is scarce, so bring your own.

Use established fire rings and consider using a fire pan - a metal tray or garbage can lid to contain a campfire and prevent the fire from blackening the soil. Before breaking camp, transfer the cold ashes into a plastic bag or other container for disposal at home.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The BLM encourages all recreationists and travelers exploring public lands, not only within southern California but throughout the west, to use a propylene glycol based antifreeze/coolant in their touring and recreation vehicles. Proven safer, it will have minimal impacts on both the wildlife and the environment should a leak occur. Please help BLM protect our desert wildlife and their fragile desert environment!

During established hunting seasons, the BLM is encouraging all hunters and recreational shooters to use lead free non-toxic shot and bullets. Proven safer, non-toxic shot significantly reduces the risks of accidental lead poisoning of wildlife and will have minimal impacts on the environment.

Please park your vehicles or set-up camp in previously disturbed sites.

For more information and/or brochures contact:
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Or visit our website at <http://www.ca.blm.gov/ridgecrest>