

NEWS



Forest Service

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Lassen National Forest

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PREPAREDNESS IS KEY TO WINTER FUN

SUSANVILLE, CA...Lassen National Forest officials are urging forest visitors to be prepared and use extra caution while enjoying the forest this winter. Visitors are reminded that mountain weather changes rapidly and snow can quickly camouflage dangerous conditions both on and off-road. "Despite the hazards of winter travel, winter offers some of the most beautiful and peaceful scenery imaginable here on the Lassen." "I encourage everyone to take the time to safely enjoy the forest this winter." commented Lassen NF Supervisor Ed Cole. Forest visitors should use extra planning during the winter months. Experience proves good planning and preparation can make the difference between an enjoyable trip and an unforgettable nightmare.

Planning and preparation needs to start before your outing. One of the first steps in planning your trip is to check the weather forecast and road conditions. Call the nearest forest service office for forest road or trail conditions and 1-800-427-ROAD for highway conditions. Leave a copy of your planned route and itinerary with a friend or neighbor. Winter forest conditions are particularly demanding on vehicles. Sandbags as extra weight may help your vehicle maintain traction and can be useful in the event you get stuck. Winter visitor's vehicles should be fully fuelled and in top mechanical condition. Visitors are urged to also bring tire chains and a winter storm survival kit.

A good winter storm survival kit includes a first aid kit, extra clothing and blankets, extra food and water, a fire starting mechanism and cooking pot, a cell phone or two-way radio, and a tool kit. Tool kits should contain jumper cables, a towrope, a flashlight, and a shovel. Forest roads and trails are periodically maintained, however winter events can quickly alter their conditions.

Travelers are reminded to be alert for rock or mudslides, fallen trees, icy bridges and avalanches. During snowstorms, trails and roads require special caution. Drivers should remember to put on tire chains before the road conditions become treacherous. Winter visitors are also advised to slowdown and use extra care near bodies of water. Dangerously thin ice can be easily be hidden by snow and go un-noticed until it is too late. Remember in the event you do get stranded do

not panic. The person with your itinerary and route will notify the authorities and you should remain with your vehicle.

Remember it is much easier to find a vehicle in the forest than a person on foot. The vehicle will also provide some shelter. While waiting for help to arrive, signal your distress by using emergency flashers and tying a handkerchief or flagging on the antenna or mirror. Be sure to keep the tailpipe clear and a downwind window open while periodically running the engine for warmth. Hopefully this will never happen to you, but with preparation, planning, and caution your winter visits to the will be both enjoyable and serene.

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