

Trail Safety Tips

By: Ranger Brandy Hanusosky

Hiking in the great outdoors provides exercise and interest for people of any age. Just getting out and walking around is a wonderful way to exercise, relax and experience nature. Since unexpected things can happen, the best way to help guarantee a good time for all is to plan ahead carefully and follow commonsense safety precautions.

- Advise friends/family of your hiking destination and schedule in case of an emergency.
- Check weather/trail conditions before you head out.
- Know your abilities and perception of danger: prior experiences, physical shape/stature, training and mental preparation.
- Carry a fully-charged cell phone.
- Hide It. Lock It. Keep It. Do not leave valuables such as purses, wallets or cell phones in plain view and lock your vehicle.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times, in the parking lot and on the trail.
- Walk confidently and look people in the eye as you pass them. This lets others know you are aware of their presence.
- If approached by a stranger, do not allow yourself to be distracted.
- Wear appropriate shoes and clothing that allow freedom of movement.
- Do not wear headphones while hiking or exercising. Being able to hear will allow you to sense someone that you may not be able to see, such as a passing cyclist.
- It is best to stay on the improved trail as you will be more easily located if you get lost or injured. Respect signage for closures and restricted areas.
- Keep dogs under control on a leash at all times.
- Use caution around dogs, horses and wildlife.
- Don't litter. Pack out what you pack in (that includes cleaning up after your pet).
- Have your keys in your hand as you approach your vehicle. Check the backseat before you enter. Lock the doors once you are inside.
- Be aware of park closure times. Most Lake Metroparks close at 11 pm; check the hours of operation signage at the park entrance. Please plan your walk accordingly and be back well before closing time. Take two sources of illumination if you plan to walk after dark and wear light colored or reflective clothing.

Emergency numbers:

Crime in progress, serious injury, life threatening emergency: dial 9-1-1

Suspicious or illegal activity, incidents involving domestic animals/wildlife, trail hazards, etc.:

Central Dispatch non-emergency number 440-354-3434