

Frequently Asked Questions

Permanent Safety Closure of High Point Road to Target Shooting

Cleveland National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management

Q. What are the specific locations for the permanent safety closure?

A. Locations that will be permanently closed to target shooting are in the Aguanga Valley south of State Route 79. Closure on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land includes portions of sections 2, 11, and 12, Township 9 South, Range 1 East. Closure on Cleveland National Forest (CNF) land includes portions of sections 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 23, 24, and 25, Township 9 South, Range 1 East, and portions of sections 18, 19, and 30, Township 9 South, Range 2 East. A map of permanent closure is available on the CNF website at www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland and on the BLM website at www.ca.blm.gov/palmsprings/.

Q. Why is the area being permanently closed to target shooting?

A. The area will be permanently closed to target shooting for public safety. Due to residential and other development on private land near the shooting area, a safe shooting distance no longer exists. Private homes and property in surrounding communities were struck with stray bullets. In addition, the State Route 79 corridor lies within the bullet trajectory area from the shooting location, so passing motorists were at risk.

Q. If the area is unsafe, why hasn't it been closed before now?

A. The CNF and BLM implemented a temporary emergency closure order for public health and safety on May 7, 2004. Due to the number of recreational shooters, residential development in the area, and increased traffic on State Route 79, the shooting area was deemed unsafe.

Q. How did the shooting area become an issue?

A. The BLM was notified by concerned residents whose property and homes were struck by stray and ricocheting bullets. This notification led to the temporary safety closure on both BLM and CNF land. Further analysis, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, resulted in the permanent safety closure.

Q. Why couldn't a change in shooting direction resolve the safety problems?

A. A 360-degree safe zone for shooting does not exist in the area.

Q. Couldn't you do anything to make the area safe for shooting?

A. As part of the environmental analysis for the project, the BLM and CNF reviewed the area and determined that the location is no longer safe for this type of recreational shooting because of the area's proximity to residential development, lack of natural backstops, and insufficient buffer zones.

Q. Where can I go to recreationally target shoot?

A. For information on shooting areas on BLM public lands contact the California Desert District Office at (909) 697-5200. The Orosco Ridge shooting area on the CNF is open. For more information on the site, contact the Palomar Ranger District at (760) 788-0250. Palomar Divide Road area from the beginning of the national forest boundary on Palomar Divide Road (9S07)—which is located near mile marker 42 on State Route 79—up to the junction of Oak Grove Road (9S09) and Palomar Divide Road (9S07) remains open to recreational shooting. The CNF will monitor the use in this area.

The following website provides a list of various locations to target shoot in southern California: http://www.socalcamping.com/shooting/shoot_info.html

Q. Does the permanent safety closure of the area to target shooting affect hunting on CNF or BLM lands?

A. No. Lawful pursuit of game animals as regulated by the California Department of Fish and Game is allowed on CNF and BLM land. For additional information on hunting please contact your local Department of Fish and Game office. Also, contact the local district office of the CNF or BLM for possible fire restrictions during hunting seasons.

Q. How can I appeal the decision of the CNF or the BLM to close the area to shooting?

A. Persons who provided comments during the scoping period or the comment period on the environmental assessments may appeal the decisions. To appeal the permanent safety closure of BLM-administered land, you must meet the requirements of Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4. Notice of appeal must be filed within 30 days of publication of the legal notice of this decision in the San Diego *Union-Tribune*. Please contact Janaye Byergo at (858) 451-1767 for further information on how to file an appeal of the BLM decision.

To appeal the permanent safety closure of CNF-administered land, you must meet the requirements of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 215. Notice of appeal must be filed with 45 days of publication of the legal notice of this decision in the San Diego *Union-Tribune*. Please contact Pete Gomben at (858) 674-2959 for further information on how to file an appeal of the CNF decision.

Q. Will other uses be restricted under the permanent closure?

A. Hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, driving on existing roads and other recreational activities will still be allowed in the area. The proposed permanent safety closure would only affect recreational target shooting.