

NCL Utah GSENM Safety Tips

Obtain Maps & Current Information - Hiking here is generally on unmarked routes. When possible, stay on established routes. Obtain current hiking information and topographic maps at any of the [local Visitor Centers](#) prior to your trip.

Inform Others about Your Plans - Let someone at home know your plans and when you expect to be back.

Obtain a Backcountry Permit - Backcountry permits are not required for overnight trips; however, free permits are available at any of the [local Visitor Centers](#) and are highly encouraged.

Know Who to Contact in an Emergency - Keep in mind that cell phones do not work in many parts of the Monument, so don't count on them. Bring a signal mirror as a backup communication device. Emergency Contacts

Drink Plenty of Water - Drink a minimum of 1 gallon of water per person per day. Filter or treat all water.

Know Where You Are - Hiking in the Escalante River canyons requires walking in water and beating a path through thick vegetation. Side canyons are easily missed. Stay oriented to your location by using a topographic map.

Beware of Hypothermia - Many canyons have deep pools that require wading or swimming. Wet conditions may cause hypothermia even during hot weather. Carry dry clothing.

Be Prepared for Tough Hiking Conditions - Climbing and scrambling isn't as easy as it looks. Many hikers find themselves stuck after climbing up something that they can't climb back down. If you become rim-rocked, stay put until help arrives. When exploring slot canyons, never jump or slide down pour-offs — you may find yourself stranded without an exit route! Quicksand is common in the Monument. Although few pockets are more than waist-deep (most are less than knee-deep), it's best to avoid it. If you do step in quicksand, don't panic!

Be Prepared for Poor Road Conditions - Storms can leave dirt roads impassable for several days. Leave extra food and water in your vehicle.

Flash Floods - Flash floods can occur at any time of year, but they are most common in July, August, and September. Checking the local weather forecast is advisable, but you should realize that conditions change quickly, and it is impossible to predict where heavy rain will occur.

- Avoid narrow canyons and washes during stormy weather.
- Be aware of changing weather conditions.
- Know your escape routes.
- If you're hiking in a stream, be aware of rising water levels or stronger currents and sudden changes in water clarity.
- Educate yourself on the terrain you are entering.

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- Realize that dry washes are a result of previous flash floods.

By entering a narrow canyon or wash, you are assuming a risk - If flooding begins, seek high ground and wait for the water to go down before attempting to walk out. Do not enter a narrow canyon if storms threaten. Never camp in a wash bottom.

Creepy Crawlies and Other Things - Educating yourself about the hazards associated with snakes, insects, and poisonous plants in the desert is essential. Take the time to follow a few key guidelines to help you stay safe.

- Rattlesnakes live here. Watch where you put your hands when climbing.
- Scorpions crawl into things at night. Shake out your shoes and clothing before you dress.
- Deer flies and gnats come out in the early summer months. In wet areas, wear long pants and long sleeve shirts to avoid fly bites.
- Poison ivy grows here near water sources. Know how to identify it — remember, “Leaves of three, let it be.”