

Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area

Traveling in the Black Rock-High Rock Area is not for everyone!

The area is remote, without paved roads, cell coverage, services, or residents. If you break down or get lost it could be several days before someone finds you! Make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to get back.

Leave an Itinerary

Inform another person where you plan to travel and when you expect to return. If you change your travel plans, alert your contact, and instruct them to notify the local law enforcement if you do not return as planned.

Water

No natural source of water is safe for drinking without treatment.

Communications

Cell phones do not work in most of the area. Satellite phones work for short conversations.

Amateur radio is dependent on the proximity of repeaters and there are very few in the area.

Judging Distance and Location

This is vast country. When leaving a vehicle it is important to note landmarks such as mountain profiles, distinctive rock formations, road or trail intersections, or vegetated areas that can help to find the vehicle from a distance. Features in the distance such as mountains during the day or auto or train lights at night are often thought to be much closer than they really are.

Playa Travel

Driving over intermittent dunes or "playa serpents" can flip a car moving at high speed or stop it in its tracks. Wet conditions on the playa can cause a vehicle to sink to its axles. Vehicles traveling together should maintain separation (both front to back and side to side) to reduce the chance of both vehicles being impeded by the same hazard at the same time.

Vehicle Breakdowns

If your vehicle breaks down – stay with the vehicle. Search and Rescue can more easily spot a vehicle than a wandering individual.

Tow Trucks

The nearest tow truck is in Gerlach just outside the extreme southwest corner of the NCA.

Hiking

The majority of trails in the NCA are unimproved and not designated by trail signs. Good maps are needed. Do not rely on a GPS that runs on batteries.

Unexploded Ordinance

The area was used as a Naval Air gunnery range during World War II. If ammunition is found, stay away, locate the site on a map, and notify the BLM or local law enforcement in Gerlach.

Hot Springs

Hot springs are hazardous and some are deadly. *Stay out and stay alive!*

The attached [Survival Checklist](#) can be used to help plan your visit.