

**LEAVE NO TRACE
OUTDOOR MANNERS AND
BACK COUNTRY ETIQUETTE**

LEAVE NO TRACE is a national program that emphasizes to all backcountry users: Pack out what you pack in, leave backcountry places cleaner than you found them, and leave natural and cultural resources intact for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. This is how citizens can join with public land agencies in maintaining and protecting beautiful, fragile public lands - both arid and forested.

1. Keep a clean camp - leave a clean camp. Earn the appreciation of those who follow you and set a good example for them, too.
2. Be respectful of private property and obtain permission from the owner(s) before crossing.
3. Leave all fences and gates as you find them. Park your vehicle where it will not block roads or gates.
4. Operate vehicles only where they will not cause ruts or start erosion. Try to avoid driving on two-track dirt roads when they are wet. Stay on established roads wherever possible.

5. Avoid disturbing wildlife and livestock by camping away from water sources. Watch your speed during lambing and calving season, March and April. Lambs separated from mothers usually don't survive. Wait for sheep to clear the road before you pass.

6. Use only dead and downed wood for your campfires. Build campfires only in safe places and never leave them unattended. Be aware of fire danger in the area - it is your responsibility to check with local, state and federal agencies to find out if fire restrictions are in effect. A person or persons who cause a fire may be held financially liable for suppression costs, which are considerable.

**CAVERS' MOTTO:
TAKE NOTHING BUT PICTURES,
LEAVE NOTHING BUT WELL-
PLACED FOOTSTEPS,
KILL NOTHING BUT TIME**



*United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Roswell Field Office*

2909 West Second Street
Roswell, NM 88201
one: 505-627-0272
Fax: 505-627-0276
[Http://www.nm.blm.gov/rfo/index.htm](http://www.nm.blm.gov/rfo/index.htm)

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**SAFETY &
CONSERVATION RULES
FOR EXPLORING CAVES**



2909 West Second Street
Roswell NM, 88201

Tel: (505) 627-0272
Fax: (505) 627-0276
[Http://www.nm.blm.gov/rfo/index.htm](http://www.nm.blm.gov/rfo/index.htm)

1. Each cave exploration party should include at least one experienced caver.
2. **Leave Word** with someone, stating which cave you are visiting and, in the case of a large cave, which part of the cave you are visiting. Leave an approximate return time and instructions that if you have not returned within six hours of the planned time, someone should be contacted for help. The New Mexico State Police have search and rescue responsibility in Nevada.
3. **No One** enters a cave alone. A minimum party of three is the rule.
4. Each group should carry a complete first aid kit. **In Case of Injury in the cave:**
 - o Send at least one person for help while one person remains with the injured party.
 - o Keep injured person warm and treat for shock.
 - o If there is any doubt concerning the extent of injury, don't attempt to move the injured person until help arrives.
5. A minimum of three separate lighting systems is recommended for each person. Carry spare batteries and bulbs. Carbide lamps are good for emergency backup and heat. Chemical light sticks are a good emergency backup light source.
6. **HELMETS ARE REQUIRED.** Construction-grade hard hats can be used but UIAA-approved caving or rock-climbing helmets are the best - these will prevent head injuries on low ceilings or in the event of a fall. Helmets must have strong, non-elastic chin straps fastened at all times while in the cave. It is **dangerous** to use bicycle, football and Army helmets in caves.
7. Carry a water supply adequate for 24 hours (minimum of one quart per person plus additional quantity for carbide lamps). High carbohydrates food is good for this activity. A spare emergency food ration is recommended.
8. Use ankle-supporting lug-sole hiking or climbing boots with no-marking rubber soles (leather soles are dangerous in caves).
9. Sturdy protective clothing is essential. Coveralls or pants the quality of blue jeans are highly suitable. Wear long-sleeved shirts (long-sleeve T-shirt and an extra in pack are good). For any crawling, knee pads will protect your knees from damage. Remember, caves are cool



(55-65 degrees) and humid. Leather gloves protect formations from body oils and keep your hands warm and clean.

10. In dusty caves avoid stirring up too much dust. Not only does cave dust impair breathing, it sometimes contains preserved disease bacteria and fungus. Wear particulate filter masks in dusty caves.

11. Don't enter a gypsum or other storm-drain type cave if there is the slightest possibility of a rainstorm anywhere near the area. Watch weather forecasts before you go.

12. Never take alcohol or other drugs while you are caving. They cause disorientation and impaired motor function which can result in serious injury or fatality in a cave environment. If you drink, do it after leaving the cave, not before.

13. Unless you have experts with you, stay away from vertical chimneys and other vertical climbing areas. Avoid attempting to penetrate piles of unstable or loose earth/rock breakdown. These can be very dangerous!

14. Stay Within Your Ability and Experience.

Never attempt to explore further into a cave than a point from which you can safely find your way out. Never exceed your climbing ability or experience. Continually **look back** as you travel through cave passages - they look much different from the opposite direction, and being able to recognize them might avoid trouble.

15. If you use any type of route marker, such as flagging tape or reflective markers, retrieve them on the way out. If you don't they can confuse others and **you have littered** the natural cave environment.

16. Find Out About the Cave Before You Go In!

When taking a surface trip, you would make it a point to learn something about your route and type of country you would be traveling through. **Do the same with caves.** BLM offices or National Speleological Society members can help.

17. Remove all manmade litter you find in the cave, except for survey markers and special flagging tape (closing an area or marking a special feature). Trash should be deposited in garbage cans or taken home with you for proper disposal. Burying garbage in-cave is unhealthy for the cave

18. Package spent carbide in plastic bags or plastic containers, remove it from the cave and dispose of it properly. Spent carbide left in-cave kills cave-adapted life.

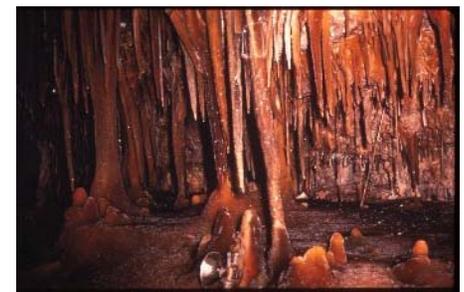
19. Please avoid contact with bats because they are easily disturbed. Disturbance of hibernating bats causes them to use up stored food reserves, which cannot be replenished due to lack of insects for food. This will result in death. Hibernating bats may also die from shock if they are suddenly awakened. Some caves contain bat nurseries, and disturbance may result in death of babies and juveniles. All bats in the Roswell region are insect eaters and farmers benefit from this because bats keep insect populations in check. One bat can eat up to six times its weight in insects per night. Therefore a bat colony of several hundred can do great damage to insect pests.

20. Caves are very fragile and have been subject to vandalism and unintentional damage. Many formations will break at the slightest touch and can't be repaired or replaced. Oil and mud from your hands will stain formations and inhibit their natural growth. All natural features in a cave should be left for others to enjoy.

21. The effect of smoking in a cave can impact cave-adapted life. Cigarette smoke is not a natural cave element. People have a tendency to unconsciously flip cigarette butts, resulting in litter and organic waste. Spitting tobacco and leaving other human waste can attract micro-organisms dangerous to human health. Microbial action on various types of human waste will cause unpleasant odors. **Cave visitors are advised to remove all human waste from cave environments and dispose of it properly.**

22. Pets should not be taken into caves because:

- o Owners are reluctant to carry out animal waste; this waste is dangerous to the cave environment.
- o Pets are difficult to control and may wade in water pools, break delicate formations, disturb cave life, such as bats, wander away from their owner and become, lost, injured or killed.



Fort Stanton Cave, Fort Stanton, NM