

HOW TO STEALTH CAMP

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SITE SELECTION

- ◆ To reduce the risk of conflict and prosecution, seek out public rather than private land
- ◆ If signs, marks or fences indicate that trespassing or camping are prohibited, move on to another location
- ◆ If the land owner is obvious and available, ask permission to camp
- ◆ Avoid areas that are sensitive for historical, cultural, religious or ecological reasons, like ruins, temples or fragile ecosystems
- ◆ Look for a site shielded from view by trees or other vegetation, hills, or embankments
- ◆ Avoid built up areas and features that attract others, such as buildings, municipal parks, party spots, roads, trails or lookouts
- ◆ Camp uphill of potential observers so you are less likely to be seen
- ◆ Stay to sunward of others as the sun's glare will obscure you, especially at sunset
- ◆ Beware of hazards such as flooding, livestock, fencing, hunting and off-road vehicles, as well as criminal and military activity
- ◆ If you're not familiar with local hazards, stick to public areas and official camping options
- ◆ Select the site in daylight to confirm it is adequately hidden and hazards can be managed (but set up only at dusk)
- ◆ Depending on your activity and location, finding a suitable stealth camping spot can take several hours

STEALTHY BEHAVIOUR

Minimize Movement by:

- ◆ Accessing your campsite only when it's likely no one is looking
- ◆ Keeping your group small and ensuring all members agree to stealth camp
- ◆ Staying only one night at each site
- ◆ Moving slowly and as little as possible

Minimize Impact by:

- ◆ Not cutting or damaging vegetation
- ◆ Not altering the environment in any way and not building fires, benches, kitchen areas, or other structures
- ◆ Leaving everything, such as livestock gates, in the position found
- ◆ Maintaining a clean and tidy campsite
- ◆ Burying human waste completely
- ◆ Packing out all garbage

Minimize Light by:

- ◆ Setting up camp right at dusk when lights are not yet necessary
- ◆ Using lights on their lowest setting
- ◆ Shining lights at the ground only, never at buildings, roads or trails
- ◆ Partially covering lights with your hand
- ◆ Using lights in red (night vision) mode
- ◆ Turning lights off when others nearby
- ◆ Avoiding unintentional flashes from phones, cameras, and stoves
- ◆ Covering any material that may reflect sunlight or other lights

Minimize Odours by:

- ◆ Not smoking
- ◆ Not making a fire
- ◆ Not cooking aromatic food

Minimize Visual Profile by:

- ◆ Wearing dark clothing (not camouflage)
- ◆ Using shadows under trees to hide you
- ◆ Concealing equipment behind rocks or vegetation, or under a dark tarp
- ◆ Setting up tents only at dusk and taking them down at first light, especially if they are brightly coloured
- ◆ Using a small shelter, or none at all
- ◆ Hanging food bags out of sight
- ◆ Not hanging up tarps or laundry
- ◆ Not being silhouetted on a ridgeline

Minimize Noise by:

- ◆ Turning off engines, music and phones
- ◆ Keeping your voices down, especially on or near the water
- ◆ Not bringing young children or pets

PADDLING — ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ◆ Dense waterfront development may limit camping options
- ◆ Beaches near settlements are commonly used by residents for off road driving, running, dog walking, or beach combing
- ◆ Shoreline campsites are very visible from the water
- ◆ Turn your boat so its end faces observers, rather than its side
- ◆ Pull boats as far into the trees as practical
- ◆ Conceal high visibility equipment—such as boats, PFDs and dry bags—behind objects, rocks or vegetation
- ◆ If shoreline is a bluff, you may be able to camp unseen below
- ◆ Consider tides and storm exposure when selecting a site
- ◆ The shoreline below the high water mark is sometimes public land, though laws vary. Don't expect waterfront land owners to be aware of this rule, even where it applies

BIKE TOURING — ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ◆ Bikes and equipment can reflect sunlight and headlights
- ◆ Set up far enough from the road so you cannot be struck by objects thrown from moving vehicles
- ◆ Highway rest areas are not private and are used around the clock by travelers, including those walking dogs

CAR CAMPING — ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ◆ Look for tracks or trails that leave remote back roads, away from traffic, freeways and built up areas
- ◆ Access roads for transmission towers, power lines, or old logging, mining or dumping areas may be suitable turn offs
- ◆ You may be able to car camp at trailheads, boat launches or visitor centres, in parking lots, or behind empty buildings
- ◆ Scout ahead on foot before pulling onto a narrow track
- ◆ Look for broken glass or other hazards where you will drive
- ◆ Brushing against vegetation may scratch the vehicle's paint
- ◆ Do not drive off road if it will damage plants or leave tracks
- ◆ Park safely out of the way in case of unexpected traffic
- ◆ Drive slowly on dirt or gravel roads to avoid kicking up dust
- ◆ Drive in without headlights, or if they cannot be turned off, drive in during daylight when it's likely no one is looking
- ◆ Turn off all interior vehicle lights before opening the doors
- ◆ Close doors quietly and try not to hit the horn by accident
- ◆ Maintain a tidy site by keeping everything in your vehicle
- ◆ Large or brightly-coloured vehicles are hardest to hide
- ◆ Light reflecting off metal or glass is visible from far away
- ◆ Winter camping is difficult as only travelled roads are plowed

IF DISCOVERED

- ◆ Remember that your actions will reflect on all others who practice your activity (e.g., other hikers, kayakers or cyclists)
- ◆ You are the visitor—be friendly and courteous (it helps to wave, smile and introduce yourself proactively)
- ◆ Explain what you are doing, and mention if you stopped due to nightfall, bad weather, fatigue or injury
- ◆ Indicate that you will leave no trace when you depart
- ◆ Move on quickly and without complaint if requested to do so