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Car-based camping in the Australian Alps National Parks

Australian Alps Liaison Committee

Minimal impact camping

Increasing numbers of visitors using national parks, wilderness areas and other reserves are causing serious damage to the natural environment. Escapes from campers' fires, expansion of campsites, trampling and cutting off vegetation, outbreaks of gastroenteritis and the rapid deterioration of walking tracks have all become more commonplace.

Fortunately many visitors have adopted a new ethic — minimal impact recreation. Without it we run the very real danger of 'loving our natural areas to death'. By learning to **tread softly**, we can minimise the damage to the natural environment and reduce the need for track and campsite closures and restrictions on visitor numbers.

This page contains suggestions for safe and enjoyable river trips with minimal impact on the environment and on other visitors. Some requirements (such as those to do with fire) carry the weight of the law. All must be used if we want to continue to enjoy the Australian Alps.



Doing the right thing

Camping is perhaps the most popular way of enjoying the great outdoors, and car-based camping is an excellent way for people of all ages to visit the Australian Alps.

Whether you camp at a designated campsite with several other groups or have found your own private camping spot, follow this code to limit the impact of your visit.

Drive on the track. Drive your vehicle only on roads that are open to the public and avoid using muddy tracks where you are likely to leave wheel ruts that cause greater soil erosion. It is irresponsible and illegal to drive off formed roads and tracks. Remove fallen trees across tracks rather than driving around them.

Management tracks are closed to private vehicles to ensure sensitive areas are not damaged and to enable other visitors to enjoy their recreation without the intrusion of vehicles.

Drive carefully on mountain roads - they can be hazardous when wet and if vehicles travel too fast. Slower speeds will also enable you to enjoy more of the alpine scenery, and help protect native animals which cross and use roads in alpine areas.

Take care on gravel surfaces and edges. Remember that other vehicles such as large trucks may be sharing the road with you.

Think before you park and leave your vehicle. Are you blocking a track that may be needed in an emergency or by another visitor to the Alps?

Carry wheel chains in winter.

Leave your pets and firearms at home. They are not allowed in national parks.

Planning your trip

Keep your party small. Large parties (of more than eight people) have more environmental impact and can adversely affect the experience of other visitors.

Go off peak. Where possible avoid the peak times of the year (December to February) and the more popular areas. You will miss the crowds and spread the impact, giving the environment a chance to recover.

Mountain weather changes very rapidly. Don't be fooled; it can snow in summer too. So be prepared.

Protect yourself and other group members against sunburn, cold, wind and rain. Take warm clothing (jumper, gloves, cap), a raincoat and wear strong shoes. Protect your skin and always wear a long sleeved top, a hat and sunscreen.

Let someone know before you go away from your campsite. Remember to let them know when you return.

Minimise your impact by taking the following items:

- i Fuel stove and fuel for cooking
- i Good quality tent
- i Hand trowel for burying toilet wastes.

See also:

- i [Care for the Alps—leave no trace](#), 2003
- i [River Users Code](#)
- i [Snow Camping Code](#)
- i [Cycling Code](#)
- i [Bushwalking Code](#)
- i [Huts code](#), 2005
- i [Horseriding Code](#)