



News Release

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California State Parks' Guide for Memorial Day Weekend

SACRAMENTO, Calif. –The Memorial Day weekend draws a high number of visitors to California's state parks. The natural beauty of our 280 parks is maintained through a joint effort between staff and our guests. State Park Rangers and Lifeguards will at maximum staffing through the weekend to ensure visitor safety.

California State Parks wants you to have all of the information available in order for you to create a safe and memorable weekend. So whether you plan on enjoying the outdoors by hiking a trail, camping, boating, etc., below are some helpful tips.

Camping

If you are planning to go camping Memorial Day weekend make plans now as campsites are filling fast at California State Parks. The reservation system for state parks shows the number of nights booked by Memorial Day campers is ahead of last year's record year. Be advised that the beach and coastal campgrounds fill up first and many favorite locations are likely full for this Memorial Day weekend.

We advise that you look inland and north, meaning those campgrounds that get less reservation pressure and are likely to have some openings left. You may also check for cancellations with our on-line notification system. First come, first serve campgrounds tend to offer more rustic accommodations including non-flush toilets and in some cases, no water.

There are 115 State Parks offering camping. There are roughly 15,000 state park camp sites in California, with about 11,000 of those on the reservation system. The rest are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. If your camping group is too large for a traditional site, there are 230 group camp sites available through the State Park system. Group sites can accommodate from 9 to as many as 100 persons, depending on the park. The traditional camp sites accommodate up to 8 people.



State Parks has set up a special campground availability [web page](#). State Parks caution that while the campground availability web page is updated daily, availability at any of the parks listed can change hourly. If you want to make a reservation, do it now. Reservation can be made up to 48 hours in advance of the day chosen, if available. Please visit Park's [website](#) for detailed information on camping reservations or call (800) 444-PARK (7275).

Finally, if you haven't been camping in a while or if it is your first time, here is a [list of tips](#) for enjoyable camping experience.

Free Admission to Veterans, Active Duty and Reserve Military Personnel

California State Parks is offering free admission to veterans, active duty and reserve military personnel at participating parks on Memorial Day. Participating state parks include 133 parks that are accessible with the "[Surf Explorer](#)" Annual Pass, plus eight [State Vehicular Recreation Areas](#), as well as the [California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento](#). However this offer does not extend to camping fees for the Memorial Day weekend. Veterans, active duty and reserve military personnel must show a valid military ID in order to receive free admission.

Boating

This year, recreational boaters are being asked to wear life jackets and save water. It is critical for boaters to plan ahead, exercise precaution and encourage everyone in a boat to wear a life jacket in order to minimize the risk of being involved in a boating accident or reduce the severity of them. Because of the drought and low water levels, recreational boating may be impacted throughout the season in some bodies of water. Let's conserve together. Conserving can keep water in our lakes and therefore provide more recreational opportunities. And remember, never get too comfortable around water when recreating, no matter how low the levels are. Below are some additional boating tips:

- **PLAN AHEAD:** You should plan ahead and [find out](#) if your favorite boating spot has any boating operating restrictions. If your favorite spot is closed for boating and you opt to boat in a river or ocean, remember that operating vessels in these environments is very different than in lakes. Plan ahead, take a [boating safety class](#) or invite someone with experience to show you how to boat safely in rivers or the ocean.
- **EQUIP YOUR BOAT:** Make sure your boat is ready for the boating season. All [required equipment](#) must be onboard. Most importantly, make sure you have Coast Guard-approved and properly fitted [life jackets](#) for everyone on board.
- **HAZARDS:** Adjust your boating activities to the [drought conditions](#). Water conditions are low enough in many places to make for hazardous boating. Areas that were easily boated a year ago may be dangerous this year. Keep a proper lookout for trees, snags, sandbars, etc.
- **BOAT RESPONSIBLY:** Take a [boating safety class or course](#) to further minimize boating accidents. It is also critical for everyone in a boat to practice [common sense](#)



[measures](#), such as wearing life jackets at all times, avoiding the consumption of alcohol and operating boats at safe speeds. Last year, the [top three causes \(statewide\)](#) of boating accidents were operator inattention, excessive speed and operator inexperience.

Hiking

Each year, thousands of people discover that walking and hiking on California State Park trails is safe and healthy fun. Be prepared and safe when hiking. Below are some tips:

- Hike with a friend or family member.
- Take plenty of drinking water.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you plan on returning.
- Don't walk off the trail.
- Remember to keep your distance from wildlife. If you encounter one, back away slowly. Report sightings to a state park ranger.
- Poison oak is a common plant throughout much of California.

Additional tips can be viewed [here](#).

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Mission

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.

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