



PRESCOTT FIRE DEPARTMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Prescott area see's an increase in trail and lake related rescue calls

Over the last month the Prescott Fire Department has seen a marked increase of rescue calls on our area trails and lakes. These rescues include heat related emergencies, injured hikers, water rescues, and lost hikers.

One of the draws to Prescott is the vast array of outdoor activities. We have miles of beautiful mountain trails, as well as several mountain lakes in and around Prescott. This combined with cooler temperatures than much of the state make our town an outdoor paradise for local residents and visitors alike. Though Prescott is cooler than the lower desert, it is important to remember that we are only about 15 degrees cooler than much of the valley. Our temperatures in the summer are consistently 90 to 100 degrees. Combine these warm temperatures with 5000 foot elevations, and many who may escape the valley heat struggle with our heat and elevation. We recommend recreating in the early morning and late evening hours to minimize exposure to the hottest part of the day.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone to recreate safely while enjoying our town. Please follow these suggestions when enjoying the outdoors.

Hydration is the most important prevention to heat related illness. Hydration starts the day prior to your outing. Drink plenty of water the day prior and the day of your hike. Plan the duration of your hike, and carry enough water with you to last the entire hike.

Plan your hike around the cooler parts of the day. This time of year we have fairly large temperature swings. Setting out at 6 am could see temperatures in the mid 60's, but by 9 am you could see temperatures in the mid to upper 80's. If you are hiking later in the day, leave yourself plenty of time to be back before night falls. Hiking at night presents greater risk for getting lost or injured.

Know your weather forecasts. Although we haven't seen a significant monsoon season this year, we urge you to look at the forecast prior to heading out. If there is a chance of storms for the day, keep your eyes on the sky. Monsoon storms develop rapidly and can bring significant rain with occasional flooding, lightning, and wind. Be prepared with proper rain gear if you are hiking during monsoon season. If on our lakes, know that wind can pose significant challenges when kayaking or paddle boarding. Please get off the lake if winds start increasing or lightning and thunder are in the vicinity of the lake.

Know your abilities and plan ahead. If you are new to hiking, start on flatter non technical terrain. Keep your hikes short until you are confident in your abilities. As you progress, plan your hikes to fit your abilities. There are numerous publications which rate and describe the trails around Prescott and provide invaluable tips for the trails. Take a map with you of the trail system to prevent getting lost.

Wear the proper clothing for your hike. Good quality hiking shoes are a must when out on the trail. Much of our trail systems terrain has uneven, slick footing. Shoes with ankle support are highly encouraged. Long sleeve light material and a wide brimmed hat can keep you cooler on hot days as well as prevent direct sun exposure to your skin. Wear sun screen to prevent sunburns. Keep bug spray with you especially during your evening hikes. Remember mosquitoes' are not the only animal on the trails, this time of year we have many snakes out and about. Watch for snakes on and off to the sides of the trail. If you do encounter a snake, keep a safe distance, and they will move away on their own.

Hike with a friend or group if possible. A buddy can assist in the event of an emergency. If you are hiking alone, make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you will be back. Always carry a charged cell phone with you and know how to use its mapping functions. In the event of an emergency, knowing your exact location will allow rescuers to get to you quickly.

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