



leave no trace

NEW ZEALAND



Pocket Guide

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace New Zealand promotes and inspires responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. This pocket guide is a part of an education programme that promotes skills and ethics for people who recreate in the outdoors. Leave No Trace works together with manufacturers, outdoor retailers, clubs, educators and individuals who share a commitment to maintain and protect the outdoors for future generations. You can do your part; inform yourself, seek out training and become an advocate for New Zealand's beautiful landscapes.

Whatungarongaro he tangata, toitu te whenua.

People come and go but the land endures.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Every outdoor activity is different so there are specific environmental and safety aspects for each activity

Before you go, check if access is allowed and your activity is permitted in the place you plan to visit. Seek permission from private landowners including tangata whenua when appropriate. Permits may be needed for certain activities such as fishing or hunting, or collecting natural materials.

Check the weather forecast and always be prepared for changing conditions

Cold, exhausted or unprepared people are more likely to leave a lasting impact. Plan to arrive at your destination in good time and with enough energy to make the best decisions for yourself and the environment.

Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use

Visits to popular destinations during high use periods, such as holidays and weekends, can be fraught with crowding and conflicts with other groups. Plan to visit popular destinations at other times.

For environmental and safety reasons, keep group numbers small

Be prepared to split larger parties into smaller groups to help minimise the impact you leave on the environment and other people.

Rescues can have the biggest impact

Leave your intentions with a reliable person or the land manager (such as DOC), stick to your plan and remember to tell the same people that you are safely back!

Be Considerate of Others

Share our tracks and waterways

We all enjoy the outdoors in different ways. Respect and expect others.

Give way to all

Make room for others. If biking, trail running or horse riding, control your speed. Pass with care and let others know you are passing.

Treat another's property as you would treat your own

Respect locals and their property. Pass quietly through farmland and leave the gates as you found them. Share the huts you stay in and welcome others who arrive after you. Leave huts better than you found them.

Let nature's sound prevail

Listen to nature. Try to keep your group's noise level down, especially at night and in remote places. Avoid the use of bright lights, mobile phones and other intrusive urban devices. If you are going to listen to music use earphones. To some technology is a necessity even in remote places. To others it is inappropriate.

Avoid conflicts by making a conscious effort to allow all people to choose their own experience.



Respect Wildlife and Farm Animals

As more people visit the outdoors, wildlife becomes affected by our presence. To avoid disturbing wildlife observe animals from a distance. If the animal moves in response to your presence, you are too close.

Never feed animals

Feeding endangers animal health and alters natural behaviours. Store food and rubbish securely to avoid feeding pests or endangering wildlife.

Follow dog regulations

Many native birds nest on the ground. Keeping your dog under control keeps people, other dogs, livestock and wildlife safe. When wildlife are chased or harassed, they change eating patterns and exert more energy that can result in poor health or death. Other people may not appreciate your dog's company. If you are not sure, ask before allowing your dog to approach them.

Avoid sensitive times

Lambing, mating, nesting or raising young are times when animals are most vulnerable to disturbance. Startled animals may abandon nests or their young resulting in the death of offspring.

Hunting and Fishing

Familiarise yourself with the target species in your area and aim to make a clean kill or a clean release every time.



Travel and Camp on Durable Ground

Stick to established tracks

Give plants and wild animals their place in the outdoors. Creating new tracks scars the landscape, causes erosion and intrudes on natural habitats.

Travel in the middle of the track

When we trample vegetation on the side of the track, there is a greater chance weeds will replace the native plants. Rain is a part of the New Zealand climate. Be prepared for muddy tracks: expect to get wet feet, wear good boots and gaiters or choose a well-maintained track with a durable surface.

Good campsites are found, not made

The best campsites are often well away from water sources and tracks. If you need to alter a site to make camp, consider whether this is the best site; there may be a better site nearby. If not, make your best choice and naturalise the area with leaves or other available cover upon your departure. Avoid building structures, moving boulders or digging trenches.

In Popular Areas: Concentrate use on existing tracks and campsites. Keep campsites small and look for surfaces where vegetation is already absent.

In Pristine Areas: Avoid areas where impacts are just beginning and allow these areas to recover.



Leave What You Find

Conserve the past; do not disturb archaeological and historical areas.

Observe but do not touch them

Leave natural objects undisturbed – load your camera, not your packs. Take photos, drawings and memories as your souvenirs.

Objects in nature derive much of their beauty from their surroundings and never look quite the same back home.

Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species

Clean your clothing and equipment after trips and before moving into a new water catchment area. Inform yourself of specific identified risks such as didymo and kauri dieback disease.



Dispose of Waste Properly

Please take out all litter – yours and others

Even biodegradable materials, such as orange peel, apple cores and food scraps can take years to break down, and attract pests like rats and possums. Rubbish is ugly and affects other's outdoor experience.

Minimise the Impact of Toilet Waste

Never miss an opportunity to use a proper toilet facility and don't dispose of your rubbish in them.

Although the topic of human waste can be an uncomfortable issue with groups in the outdoors, it is very important to address it directly. If you must poo in the outdoors, do so in a hole dug 10–15 cm deep at least 50 m (100 steps) from water, campsites, and tracks. This will promote decomposition of the waste and reduce the likelihood that others may have unpleasant encounters. Cover and disguise the hole when you are finished and be sure to pack out all hygiene products in a plastic bag.

Soaps and shampoo damage fragile stream life

To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water well away from streams and lakes. Soaps, shampoo and detergents don't belong in streams. If you must use them, use only small amounts of biodegradable products, and rinse well away from streams.

Minimise the Effects of Fire

Even though campfires have been a part of the outdoors for a long time, the legacy of campfires and barbeques too often are charred picnic areas and rocks, large rubbish-filled fire rings, damaged trees and uncontrolled wildfires.

Fires can cause lasting impacts and be devastating to forests, natural habitats and farmland

Follow local fire regulations and rules. Where fires are permitted and appropriate, use techniques to reduce your impact on the land and avoid leaving unsightly and ecologically damaging fire scars.

Improving your fire building techniques helps minimise our impact

Where possible use established fire rings or mound fires, and consider using a lightweight stove. Be sure to keep your campfire small and under control. For firewood, use small sticks from the ground, which can be broken by hand. Do not use live vegetation for firewood. Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out the campfire completely and scatter the cool ashes away from vegetation. Fires are for wood and paper only. When plastic burns, it releases poisonous smoke. Cans, foil and glass do not burn.



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Leave No Trace New Zealand is a network of organisations and individuals with an interest in promoting the responsible recreational use of the outdoors.

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