



## What it means to travel here.

In 1843-44, John C. Frémont led a party of explorers down High Rock Canyon during his famous Western Expedition. This initial exploration led to the creation of the Applegate Trail, crossed by tens of thousands of Emigrants during the 1800's. Times were treacherous and many lives were lost along the trail. The experience is much the same in modern times. Today, the Black Rock desert area welcomes over 100,000 visitors each year, with about half of those travelling into the outer reaches of the NCA in search of game hunting, hidden springs, historic discoveries and the call of the wild.

## Rely on yourself: Common Sense and Caution.

This is a big place, far from anywhere. Emergency services, medical facilities, and rescue resources are scarce. By the time you are able to call for help it may be too late.

In a remote area relatively simple actions such as cutting wood, operating vehicles, cooking, etc., could have a disastrous outcome should injury occur. Pay attention to what you are doing, think about your own safety and the safety of others when you are out in the wilderness.

Carry a well-equipped first aid or trauma kit with you at all times. When possible your party should include someone with basic first aid training, a Wilderness First Responder, or an EMT. Make medical conditions known, such as allergies, medications taken, special physical considerations, and chronic conditions known to the trip leader and/or medic to avoid confusion or problems later. See back panel for medical contact information.

Emergency Services, Medical facilities, & Rescue.  
**Dial 911 for all emergencies.**

### **Gerlach Medical Clinic:**

Limited medical services located at 325 Short Street (behind the Post Office) in Gerlach.  
Monday - Thursday: 8:00am - 5:00pm  
775-557-2312

### **Gerlach Volunteer Fire Department**

For serious medical scenes, GVFD will escalate assistance by calling for an ambulance or helicopter from Reno. Response time is about 1 hour to Gerlach, 1.5 to High Rock Canyon..

### **Washoe County Search And Rescue**

Response time for WCSAR from Reno is about 2.5 hours.

### **To Report Wildfires**

(775) 623-3444 (800) 535-6076

## Visitor Information.

From May - October, the Friends of Black Rock operate a Visitor Contact Center, located on Hwy 447, just north of Gerlach. Check the kiosk near the watertower in Gerlach or stop by the following offices for maps and updates.



### **Friends of Black Rock High Rock Office and Museum**

301 Main St. Gerlach, NV 89412  
Mon. - Sat. 9:00am - 5:00pm  
(775)-557-2900  
[www.blackrockdesert.org](http://www.blackrockdesert.org)

### **BLM Surprise Field Office**

602 Cressler Street, Cedarville, CA 96104  
(530) 279-6101  
[www.blm.gov/ca/surprise](http://www.blm.gov/ca/surprise)

### **BLM Winnemucca District Office**

5100 E. Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca NV 89445  
(775) 623-1500  
[www.blm.gov/nv](http://www.blm.gov/nv)



# Tips and techniques for Travelling In Nevada's Black Rock Country.



**When the pavement ends, the experience begins.**

## **Protect. Respect. SURVIVE**

**It is important to reduce the risks when travelling in Black Rock country. Know before you go.**

- Do you have enough water?
- Do you have enough fuel?
- Do you have a medical kit?
- Do you have spare tires and a jack?
- Do you have shovels, shade and weather protection?
- Do you know that communications are limited?
- Do you know that conditions can change rapidly?

In addition to the essentials, there are many tips that can help ensure a good and safe experience. Find them inside.

[www.blackrockdesert.org](http://www.blackrockdesert.org)

## Safety Tips For Black Rock Country

Hydrate! The importance of water.

**Drink at least 1 gallon of water per day.** Because water is best absorbed by your system slowly over time, sipping water frequently is better than guzzling a lot to catch up later. Sip regularly whether you are thirsty or not because by the time you are thirsty, you may be lacking a liter or more. Cloudy urine may be a sign of dehydration. Headaches, nausea and irritability are also some of the first signs.

Many electrolyte drinks (like Gatorade) contain sugar and extra ingredients. Ironically, it takes more water to process these extra ingredients, so water them down 50% or more.

If you are running low conserve what you have left, but if it is only a small amount it is better to drink it and store it in your body rather than in a canteen or container. Carrying 2 gallons per person per day is recommended to allow for washing, etc. **Never go anywhere without enough water to last longer than the trip you have planned.**

Expose yourself at your own risk:

The more exposed your body is, the more water you will lose from the sun and wind. (Bedouins wear full robes to prevent this effect.) Wear a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and loose fitting clothes. The Black Rock Desert has one of the largest temperature variations in the US, sometimes it's 110° Fahrenheit during the day and 40° at night. The same temperature regulating mechanism your body uses to stay cool during the day is what keeps you warm at night. Bring warm layers for night. If you are very cold you may be dehydrated. Monitor yourself and your campmates for heatstroke, heat exhaustion, hyper and hypothermia.

### Exposure to dangerous conditions.

If you camp in an exposed place be aware of high winds, especially if you have a fire. Do not camp in the middle of the playa unless you can light your camp at night, all night. Someone may crash into your camp or run over your tent. Be aware of potential dangers from ATV traffic and target shooting and camp away from these use areas. Do not camp in a road or within 300 feet of any hot spring or water. Know and respect state and federal laws.

**Exposure to Wildlife.** Possibly the most dangerous critters out here are mountain lions, although it is rare you will encounter one. There are also rattlesnakes, scorpions and black widow spiders. Be careful in turning over rocks or wood where these creatures may be hiding and understand medical care for potential bites.



Your Vehicle Can Make or Break Your Trip. Check It Twice.

A dead battery, flat tire, or breaking down may cost you the rest of your vacation, or even your life. Fill up on fuel. Check your radiator and all fluids. Check your

belts and hoses. Check your battery and alternator. Check your tires - 8-ply tires or better are best. Carry two full size spares if possible. (No doughnuts) and check the air in *all* of your tires. Always carry a tire iron, a good jack, and a shovel. Carry extra water and shade in case you break down. Also carry flashlights, flares, strobes, a mirror and/or other signaling devices. Take two vehicles when possible to improve the odds for a safe return.

### Drive carefully on roads and designated routes. SLOW DOWN.

The ride may seem smoother on gravel when travelling faster but the chances of losing a tire go up about 50% between 35 and 60 mph. The most common major accidents on roads or the playa are roll overs due to making sharp turns at speed. *Injury and death may be the result of high speed. Do not drink and drive.*

**Be aware! Avoid wet areas on the playa.** A trail of dust is the best indicator that it's dry. Dark colored patches or salty white crust on the edges of the playa usually indicate wet areas. If you accidentally

### Navigation & GPS:

A GPS won't replace a compass and maps, and certainly can't save you if you don't know how to use it, but they can be a supplement to these basic navigation tools/skills. Handheld GPS units are preferable to the vehicle mounted ones, as they can be taken with you on foot. The GPS should not be left on and used as a compass, as this is a waste of time and batteries. (Always carry extra batteries, though.) A GPS has no idea which way it's currently oriented so can not tell you direction unless it is moving several miles per hour, and even then it is only a relative direction, as it has no actual idea which way it is currently oriented. A GPS won't guide you around obstacles and could lead you straight into trouble if you do not pay attention. Consider marking your camp as a

enter wet ground keep your momentum and make a long arcing turn away from the soft playa back to drier ground.

**If you get stuck or break down, stay with the vehicle.** If you think no one will find you and it's hot, walk out at night to stay cool. Carry boards or plywood for jacking in soft, sandy areas or to help with tire traction should you become stuck in the mud.

Cell Phones, Hand-Held and HAM Radios.

**Most cell phones do not work out here.** Service is limited in and around Gerlach and Cedarville. Let someone know where you plan to go and when you will return. Create a detailed rendezvous point ahead of time for all members of your group.

Radios make it easier to do everything, including call for help, in a place so vast. If you have a handheld radio and are on the edge of your range, extend it by climbing on top of your vehicle or somewhere elevated before attempting to make contact. HAM resources have been installed on the edge of the desert and are available to all amateur radio users in the region.

- UHF Repeater / IRLP Node 7249 • Simplex
- 444.175 MHz (+), PL 100.0 • APRS Digipeater GERLCH
- VHF IRLP Node 3075 • 144.39 MHz simplex
- 146.7 MHz, PL 100.0 • Internet Gateway APRS-IS

There is a phone patch on the UHF repeater. If your radio has a keypad you can dial 911 for Washoe County Dispatch in Reno. Learn more at: <http://cq-blackrock.org>. Another repeater, 147.030 MHz, PL123, is located on Virginia Peak near Nixon. This repeater is linked to one on Peavine in Reno. Most mobile radios will be able to reach this repeater from the Playa north of Gerlach. Radio knowledge is an asset, take the time to learn.

waypoint in your GPS. Consider marking nearby water sources as well. These may also serve as local food sources, depending upon the location, potability, flora, and presence of wildlife.

Some useful GPS coordinates in and around the playa: (Note: these coordinates are given in the "UTM" grid system, or Universal Transverse Mercator grid system, the most common and best for use with topographical maps.)

"12-mile" Playa Access: 4516362mN x 309022mE

"8-mile" Playa Access: 4513909mN x 307776mE

"3-mile" Playa Access: 4507764mN x 301411mE

"Solider Meadows Turnoff": 4518265mN x 307771mE