



Trail Hiking Safety

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As the weather warms up more and more people are taking advantage of our beautiful hiking trails within Fairfield Glade as well as Cumberland County and our Parks. We won't sugarcoat this. Hiking can be dangerous. Sprained ankles, bad cuts and bruises, serious falls, broken limbs and even death are possible on almost any trail, but the risk of serious injury can be minimized by following a few simple steps.

Know your Terrain! Before you hike somewhere, know what it will be like and do some research. Read a guidebook, check online, ask the trails committee questions, look at Topo maps and Google Satellite images; do whatever you can to understand what you will be dealing with. By researching your trail and the terrain you will be encountering, you will be able to bring the right clothes, shoes, amount of water and food and other miscellaneous gear. Always have a cell phone so you can call for help. For trails in Fairfield Glade, go to <https://gladetrails.com>. You will find an updated list of trails, a map of the trail, the distance, rating, GPS coordinates, where to park and a description. If you feel adventurous, go to <https://crossvilletrails.com> for a list of hiking groups in the Glade, trails in Crossville as well as Cumberland Mountain State Park.

Dress Properly! If you hike any of the popular trails in the region during the spring, summer and fall months, you have seen your fair share of people wearing clothes that aren't the smartest for day hikes. Wear the right clothes and the right shoes and bring raingear with you at all times. Even if the forecast calls for no rain over the next five days, always be prepared. If possible, bring hiking poles or sticks. A simple rule is that if you are wearing something you usually wear to work out in the gym while on a hike, you are underprepared.

Leave a note of where you are going! Never go hiking without telling at least 2 other people where you are going and when you expect to return. This is one of the simplest ways to stay safe and get rescued, should you become stranded.

Know your limits and abilities! You, more than anyone else, know what your body is capable of doing while hiking. The worst thing you can do is to push yourself too hard and get stuck, unable to hike up or down. Do not feel like you have to keep up with someone hiking faster than you, as they are hiking at their pace and not yours. As soon as you feel out of your comfort zone, take a break, eat some protein, and drink some water and rest. If you still feel fatigued after a break of 5 or 10 minutes with zero improvement of your health and

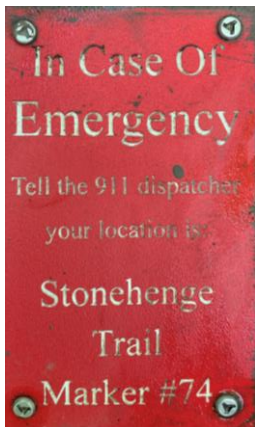


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well-being, rest a bit more and call it a day. You are hiking for your enjoyment, not to keep up with everyone else.

Stay hydrated! The absolute worst thing you can do while hiking is to not stay properly hydrated and fed. Depending on the hike, you can lose anywhere between 2,000 and 6,000 calories to reach your destination. Those calories need to be replenished, or you will start seeing an increase in cramping, loss of high-level cognitive abilities, dizziness and severe lethargy. Hiking is not the time to skip a meal or hold steady to your diet. Eat a ton while on the trails and diet while at home. More common than not eating is not bringing water with you. Some people carry Salt Sticks with them in case of excessive sweating.

Stay on the trail! Staying on the trail should always be done, not just for your safety, but for minimizing humanity's impact on the fragile natural areas we all enjoy so much. Numerous injuries occur each day on trails around the country from people leaving the trail for a better picture or to make the trip more fun. Injuries also occur off trail by hikers who get lost on the trail, which is something studying the terrain and trails can help alleviate. By staying on the trail, you are keeping yourself in a well-known area, so if an accident was to occur, search and rescue could easily reach you and transport you to safety. Leaving the trail on a hike should only be done for two reasons: To use the bathroom or to avoid an aggressive animal. If you end up in trouble or hurt on most Fairfield Glade trails and many Crossville trails, there are 911 signs with the **name of the trail** and the **marker number**. When you call 911, give them that information so emergency personnel can find you. These



red signs can be found screwed into wooden footbridges or posts along the trail.



Name of Trail



Marker Number



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Encountering a bear! Although not likely in Fairfield Glade or Crossville, there is always the possibility of encountering a bear. When hiking, make noise since bears will stay away from you if they hear people coming. Some people like to have a whistle. If you come across a bear, stand and face the bear. Identify yourself in a calm, appeasing tone. Make yourself look as big as possible by spreading your arms slowly. Make as much noise as possible. Back away slowly, preferably in the direction you came. Walk, don't run and keep your eye on the bear so you can see how it will react. Never get between a bear and her cubs.

"KEEP SAFE BY BEING PREPARED"

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