

ACTIVITIES

7 TIPS FOR PERFECT CAMPING ETIQUETTE



The quiet of nature and the escape from the constant buzz of life is calling. Few things are as relaxing and therapeutic as pushing your “reset” button by taking a camping trip in the wilderness where you can unplug from the daily hustle and just enjoy the outdoors.

But, that relaxing camping trip you’ve been dreaming of can come to a horrifically loud, screeching halt if you’re stuck with bad camping neighbors.

All it takes is one obnoxious person to ruin your whole camping trip. We likely have all dealt with a bad camping neighbor one time or another, and maybe even we’ve been that bad neighbor ourselves (though we hope not!).

To make sure you don’t become the reason why someone’s camping trip is ruined, we are going to break down seven things to keep in mind while camping to ensure you are a respectful neighbor. Want even more tips? Check out our [definitive guide to camping etiquette](#).

Your fellow campers’ escape from reality and out into the great wide open is just as wanted and needed as yours, so here’s how to have a great time, without your neighbors even knowing you’re there.



1. QUIET HOURS

Shhhhhh! We've all been shushed by our elementary school librarian and remember how embarrassing that was? As an adult, you don't want to have your camping neighbors shush you — it can make for a very awkward trip. To avoid from hearing that annoying “shhhhhh” sound, be sure to abide by the quiet hours rules. Campgrounds will typically post their quiet hours so that everyone can easily see, but usually they are from around 10:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. the next morning. This doesn't mean you have to tiptoe around and whisper, but it does mean that you shouldn't be running any generators, blasting loud music, or having a loud party.

You may not be able to avoid getting to the campground during quiet hours, and if that's the case, just try to be as quiet as possible while you set your site up.

2. PETS

Our dogs love camping just as much as we do, but not everyone shares our love for dogs. In other words, don't let your dog out of your sight. Most campsites require that owners keep their dogs on a leash at all times to keep them from running into the camps of others. And no matter how much your dog loves running wild, you are no exception to this rule.

Another thing you will want to be sure of with your dog is to keep its barking to an absolutely minimum. Understandably, you cannot keep your dog from barking entirely, but few things are worse than trying to sleep when a nearby dog is barking through the entire night. Some campgrounds may even ask you to leave if your dog is disturbing others too much.

And don't forget about the traces your pet leaves behind. Be sure to always clean up after your pets and don't leave dog waste for others to step in.

3. FIRES

What's a camping trip without a fire and some fresh smores? Not a camping trip at all, in our book! However, there are times where fire restrictions are placed and you must stick to them. Though you may be tempted by the fire pit in your site, if a fire restriction is being enforced, do not light.

If you are in the clear to start a fire, use only wood. Whatever you do, do not throw trash into your fire! This could cause a whole slew of problems. And when it comes to the wood, check the firewood rules for your specific campground. Some allow you to gather firewood, and others strictly prohibit it. The ones that don't allow for firewood gathering typically sell firewood for you to use. Do a bit of research before you head out on your trip to see what your campsite's fire rules are.

Most importantly, make sure that your fire is *completely* out before leaving. All it takes is one little spark to start a monster fire. And trust us, you do not want to be *that* person!



4. CHILDREN

Getting to explore in the outdoors is an incredibly exciting experience for children. All of us (kids included!) are stuck indoors far more than we'd like to be, so sometimes a trip to the outdoors is our chance to let loose. Just don't let your children *too* loose where they are driving your neighbors crazy. Set some rules with your kids such as:

- Don't run into someone else's campsite
- Be careful when riding bikes or scooters through the campground
- Try to keep voices on the quiet side (this is a must during quiet hours)

Also remind them to be aware of the often busy traffic in and out of campsites to keep them safe.

You don't want your children to feel prohibited from having fun while camping, just make sure that they aren't having fun at someone else's expense.

5. WASTE

Regardless of how minimal of a camper you are, you are going to have some waste. And, to be a good neighbor, be sure you are ridding of your waste in a responsible way. First and foremost, do not litter! The negative effects of this are numerous, but we'll simplify it by just saying that you have an obligation to keep our outdoors beautiful. Also, always empty your black or gray water tanks in designated areas and never just wherever you see fit.



6. WILDLIFE

Though tempting, do not share your food with wildlife in your camping area. A small bite of a hot dog may seem harmless, but who knows what that one bite could potentially attract. Keep it safe, smart, and respectful by refusing to share any of your treats with non-humans.

7. NO TRACE

The goal when you leave the campground is to make it look like you were never there. This is not just for your neighbor, but also for the campers who use your site next, and also for the environment. If you moved anything, move it back. Clean up your garbage and recycle, if possible.

A clean campsite ensures future camping for everyone!

Being a good camping neighbor isn't hard — in fact, it seems harder to be a bad camping neighbor! And if you *really* want to pay it forward, we suggest a batch of cookies to share with your neighbors.

Cookie-bearing or not, get out there and enjoy yourself. By loving thy [camping] neighbor, we can all continue to enjoy the great things camping has to offer.

