Safety & Security Reminders

Death Valley specific –

Cell phone reception is downright TERRIBLE. National Park Service warns to not depend on cell signals for safety or navigation. Cell reception is available in the resorts and spotty in other areas. Verizon has more coverage than AT&T. Wi-Fi only available at hotels/only in lobbies in some hotels.

"Google Maps" offline. Learn to use smart phone "Google Maps" offline for GPS travel directions if your car doesn't have a good GPS or to carry if you will be hiking. Use compass App on your smart phone.

Download maps to your smart phone/tablet and carry a detailed paper map.

Keep extra water and snacks and a good flashlight in your car.

Stay with the car if it gets stuck or breaks down, walking away is dangerous.

Keep gas tank topped off; DV is very large and there are few services.

Sand and wind. Bring plastic bags to keep your camera and lenses free from sand.

Car "stuck" in the sand, use the same techniques as in the snow: accelerate very slowly, don't spin tires, dig out, air down tires, towels or floor matt under tires for traction.

AAA or Other Roadside assistance may not respond if you are too far off paved roadway. The tow truck makes this decision. Extra cash offer may help.
- Carry your AAA or other roadside assistance card with you

Car security. Crime rate is low; but remember you will be leaving your car to hike and take photos or explore.
- Cover from sight or hide in your trunk everything valuable
- Cover or hide items before you stop, it's too late if they see you hide things
- Thieves 1st check your front seats, center console and for purses stuffed under the front seats and then your back seat floor area
- **Carry snow chains** as we will be at some high elevations, crossing summits on Hwy 395 plus peaks in DV in early March which is "winter".
- Cell phone charger needs to be in your car.
- Always lock your car, even if you are just "going to be a minute".
- Make a habit to always to take your keys with you when you step out of your car
- Be on alert when fueling up, more "grab" thefts at gas stations and thieves working in teams to distract.

Lodging - housekeeping and wait staff in DV are mostly itinerants.

- Use a lock on your bag to secure any valuable items you leave in your room.
- Place a chair or bag next to the door when you are in your room.
- Consider a “door stopper” for extra room security.
- Bring a small flashlight for emergencies.
- Bring some “hand wipes” to clean your door handles, remote, etc.
- Bring your own “alarm clock” as we will be out very early in the mornings.
- Bring your own “happy hour” beverage.
- Opera House – bring garlic cloves to ward off vampires and ghosts.

In the field

- Keep an “emergency rescue whistle” in your camera bag ($5).
- Lock your car, valuables out of sight, when stopping to take photographs as we all tend to keep wandering for a good composition.
- Keep your cell phone with you when leaving your car, many reasons
- Boots, hiking shoes, trial shoes or similar foot ware is recommended as we will be on uneven and rough ground
- Rattlesnakes are very rare, but be aware. Don’t put your hands or feet under a rock outcropping or bush without checking.
- In remote or resort areas, it may be better to pay for meals in cash as wait staff and cashiers are “just passing thru” itinerants

Other reminders

<u>Bottled water, snacks and happy hour beverages</u>

Consider bringing bottled water, snacks and happy hour beverages with you from home. In Death Valley’s remote location, prices are often double as there is no competition. Also, you will always need to carry extra water and snacks in your car.

<u>Car breakdowns and desperately lost</u>.

If you are really stuck in a remote area and no one seems to be around to rescue you and you are concerned for your life, there is one sure-fire way to summon help. Start a fire. If in your car, burning your spare tire will send up black smoke seen for miles. Need matches and sticks, paper to get started. Doesn’t work at night. Best to stay with your car unless just a short hike back to a main road. Bad things happen when you don’t stay with the car.