

BLM State-by-State Compliance Checklist + Penalty Guide

2025 Edition | Complete Reference for Dispersed Camping

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Quick Reference Summary

Universal BLM Rules (All States):

- Maximum 14 consecutive days per area
 - Must move minimum distance after 14 days
 - Cannot return to same area for 28 days
 - Self-contained camping only
 - Leave No Trace principles mandatory
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STATE-BY-STATE COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

ARIZONA

Relocation Distance: 25 miles minimum (increased from 5 miles in 2025)

Measurement: Straight-line distance

Peak Enforcement: December - March

Violation Rate: 8.4 per 1,000 camper days (highest nationally)

Required Equipment:

- ■ Portable toilet in designated LTVA areas
- ■ Grey water tank (under 40 gallons)
- ■ Fire extinguisher (2A10BC minimum)
- ■ Shovel for fire suppression

LTVA Areas & Fees:

- Quartzsite LTVA: \$420 (7-month), \$40 (weekly)
- Yuma East/West: \$420 (7-month), \$40 (weekly)
- Effective: October 1, 2025

High-Risk Areas: Quartzsite, Yuma, Lake Havasu City

Common Violations: Extended stays (34% of citations)

CALIFORNIA

Relocation Distance: 10 miles (desert regions), 25 miles (elsewhere)

Measurement: Straight-line distance

Peak Enforcement: Year-round with seasonal fire restrictions

Violation Rate: 6.7 per 1,000 camper days

Required Equipment:

- ■ Portable toilet in designated areas
- ■ Grey water containment system
- ■ Fire extinguisher (2A10BC minimum)
- ■ Shovel for fire suppression

Special Restrictions:

- Fire restrictions: May 1 - October 15
- Drone surveillance pilots in desert regions
- Environmental damage penalties: \$500-2,000+

High-Risk Areas: Mojave Desert, Imperial County

Common Violations: Environmental damage, off-route travel

UTAH

Relocation Distance: 25 miles minimum

Measurement: Straight-line distance

Peak Enforcement: March, September, October (seasonal sweeps)

Violation Rate: 5.9 per 1,000 camper days

Required Equipment:

- ■ Portable toilet (Moab region mandate effective Jan 2025)
- ■ Fire extinguisher (mandatory statewide)
- ■ Shovel for fire suppression
- ■ Waste containers (20+ gallon capacity)

Special Restrictions:

- Sheriff department collaboration for enforcement
- Wildlife protection zones: Zero tolerance
- Higher elevation seasonal closures

High-Risk Areas: Moab corridor, Sand Flats Recreation Area

Common Violations: Permit violations, wildlife disturbance

NEVADA

Relocation Distance: 25 miles statewide standard

Measurement: Straight-line distance

Peak Enforcement: Minimal in rural areas, increased near cities

Violation Rate: 4.2 per 1,000 camper days

Required Equipment:

- ■ Portable toilet at 12+ designated areas
- ■ Waste containers (20+ gallon capacity)
- ■ Fire extinguisher
- ■ Shovel for fire suppression

Special Restrictions:

- Mining area restrictions strictly enforced
- 89% of citations within 50 miles of cities
- GPS tracking used for monitoring

High-Risk Areas: Las Vegas vicinity, Reno area

Common Violations: Mining area trespass, extended stays

COLORADO

Relocation Distance: 25 miles minimum

Measurement: Straight-line distance

Peak Enforcement: May - October (seasonal access)

Violation Rate: 3.8 per 1,000 camper days

Required Equipment:

- ■ Fire extinguisher (mandatory above 8,000 feet)
- ■ Shovel for fire suppression
- ■ Bear-proof food storage (wilderness areas)
- ■ Waste containers (20+ gallon capacity)

Special Restrictions:

- Higher elevation seasonal closures (October - May)
- Wildlife protection zones with zero tolerance
- 67% warning rate before citations

High-Risk Areas: Front Range proximity, wilderness boundaries

Common Violations: Seasonal camping, wildlife food storage

NEW MEXICO

Relocation Distance: 25 miles minimum

Measurement: Straight-line distance

Peak Enforcement: Variable by region

Violation Rate: 3.2 per 1,000 camper days

Required Equipment:

- ■ Fire extinguisher
- ■ Shovel for fire suppression
- ■ Waste containers (20+ gallon capacity)

Special Restrictions:

- Archaeological site protections strictly enforced
- Fire restrictions during dry seasons
- Cultural resource damage: Federal felony charges possible

UNIVERSAL PENALTY SCHEDULE

Most Expensive Violations (2024 Data)

- Base fine: \$1,000
- Suppression costs: \$15,000-150,000+
- Prevention: Carry 5+ gallons water, metal fire ring
- 1 **Wildfire Caused by Campfire: \$47,850 average**
 - Basic citation: \$150-300
 - Habitat restoration: \$500-2,000
 - Recovery/towing: \$200-800
- 1 **Off-Route Driving with Resource Damage: \$650 average**
 - Grey water: \$200-300
 - Black water: \$500-750
 - Environmental restoration: \$2,000-5,000 additional
- 1 **Waste Dumping Violations: \$425 average**
 - During burn bans: \$300-500
 - Unattended fire: \$200-400 additional
 - Equipment confiscation possible
- 1 **Fire Restriction Violations: \$385 average**
 - Tree/shrub damage: \$200-500
 - Restoration costs: Variable, often \$1,000+
 - Rare plant damage: Federal felony possible
- 1 **Vegetation Damage: \$320 average**
 - First offense: \$75-150
 - Repeat violations: \$500-1,000
 - Equipment seizure: Possible after 3rd violation
- 1 **Extended Stay (Over 14 Days): \$275 average**
 - No permit: \$100-200
 - Ejection: Immediate + lost site fees

- Expired permit: \$75-125
 - 1 **LTVA Permit Violations: \$150 average**
 - Over 14 people: \$75-150
 - Group camping: Requires special permits
 - Multiple vehicle violations: +\$50 each
 - 1 **Occupancy Limit Exceeding: \$125 average**
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PRE-DEPARTURE COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

30 Days Before Departure

- ☐ Download offline maps for target areas
- ☐ Check current fire restrictions by region
- ☐ Verify LTVA permit requirements and fees
- ☐ Research local field office contact information

7 Days Before Departure

- ☐ Check weather and seasonal closures
- ☐ Confirm equipment compliance by state
- ☐ Download BLM Recreation Permits app
- ☐ Print backup field office contact sheets

Day of Departure

- ☐ GPS tracking app installed and configured
 - ☐ All required equipment loaded and accessible
 - ☐ Emergency contact information updated
 - ☐ Compliance documentation folder organized
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DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Essential Records to Maintain

- GPS logs with timestamps
- Photos of campsite on arrival/departure
- Odometer readings and mileage calculations
- Fuel receipts showing movement between areas
- Any ranger interaction documentation

Digital Backup Strategy

- Cloud storage for all GPS data
- Photo timestamps enabled
- Offline map downloads current
- Contact information for legal assistance if needed

EMERGENCY CONTACTS BY STATE

Arizona BLM Field Offices

- Phoenix: (623) 580-5500
- Yuma: (928) 317-3200
- Lake Havasu: (928) 505-1200

California BLM Field Offices

- Palm Springs-South Coast: (951) 697-5200
- Needles: (760) 326-7000
- Barstow: (760) 252-6000

Utah BLM Field Offices

- Moab: (435) 259-2100
- Richfield: (435) 896-1500
- Salt Lake City: (801) 977-4300

Nevada BLM Field Offices

- Las Vegas: (702) 515-5000
- Carson City: (775) 885-6000
- Ely: (775) 289-1800

Colorado BLM Field Offices

- Colorado Springs: (719) 269-8500
- Grand Junction: (970) 244-3000
- Gunnison: (970) 642-4940

New Mexico BLM Field Offices

- Las Cruces: (575) 525-4300
 - Roswell: (575) 627-0272
 - Albuquerque: (505) 761-8700
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LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Federal Citation Consequences

- Appear on federal background checks
- Can affect employment and security clearances
- More serious than local camping violations
- May require court appearances

Appeal Process

- Citations can be contested through federal administrative procedures
- Success rates vary by violation type and evidence quality
- Documentation of good-faith compliance efforts strengthens appeals
- Legal representation recommended for significant penalties

Disclaimer: This guide reflects regulations as of September 2025. Rules change frequently. Always verify current regulations with local BLM field offices before traveling.

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