

Where can I camp in State forest?

Camping in the forest has long been a popular pursuit and there are many areas of State forest where visitors can enjoy camping in a beautiful forest setting.

Campers are welcome to use most areas of State forest in Victoria (see map), with many campsites located near water, in picturesque forest locations. The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing State forest and further information on specific campsites is available from DSE's Customer Service Centre on ☎136 186.

What facilities are provided?

Whilst in some areas of State forest, there are serviced campsites; generally State forest camping areas have minimal facilities. Typically campsites will offer basic pit toilet facilities, picnic tables, fireplaces and low level interpretation, however some will offer a clearing and little else. For this reason it is best to be self-sufficient and come prepared.

Minimal impact camping

Forests are special places, but to remain so they need your help. To protect the delicate environs of the forest, we need to 'tread lightly' in the bush to minimise our impact on the natural environment. Here are some basic rules you should follow:

- Camp in an existing campsite rather than create a new one and camp at least 20 metres from any stream, lake or reservoir.
- Be careful of camping under trees. Trees can lose their limbs at any time, but particularly during high winds.
- Do not dig trenches around tents. With modern tents, this is unnecessary, particularly if you choose a well-drained or raised site.
- Use toilets where they are provided. In areas without toilets, bury toilet waste in a 15 cm deep hole at least 100 metres away from campsites and watercourses.
- All native plants and animals are protected. Do not cut down or damage standing trees or vegetation.
- Take your rubbish home. Don't burn or bury rubbish. If you have the misfortune to come across other people's rubbish, do the bush a favour and take it out with you too.
- Use only dead fallen wood. Standing trees, even dead ones are a home for wildlife and a part of the scenery.

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- Firewood is in short supply in many areas. Gather firewood well away from your camp and use it sparingly, keep it small and be conservative in your use of fuel or better still, bring your own. Where possible, use a lightweight stove for cooking.
- Take care with fire – observe all fire regulations and Total Fire Ban days. Use existing fireplaces rather than create your own. Ensure fires are safe and that they are completely extinguished when you leave.
- Keep to the track. Drive your vehicle only on roads that are open to the public.
- Protect water quality - wash up at least 50 metres away from streams and avoid using soap (use gritty sand and a scourer instead).
- Leave campsites tidy.
- Keep your party small. Ideally, less than eight people.
- Go off peak.

Camping is also allowed in national parks and other reserves, where it does not pose a significant conflict with conservation. Due to some differences in regulations between these national, state, coastal and other parks, to avoid disappointment it is best to check with Parks Victoria.

Where can't I camp?

In State forest, camping is not permitted within 20 metres from any stream, lake or reservoir. This is to ensure that areas near the water remain available for use by other visitors.

Use of certain areas such as day visitor areas, reference areas, operational logging coupes, and operational firewood coupes are not encouraged. There are also a limited number of scenic reserves where camping is not allowed (ie. Steavenson Falls Scenic Reserve near Marysville) or only allowed in designated campsites (ie. Murrindindi Scenic Reserve near Toolangi).

These limitations are in place to protect significant and environmentally sensitive areas, for your safety, to minimise potential conflict with other users, and to prevent soil erosion. It is very important that campers cooperate with DSE staff to ensure compliance in these matters.

For restrictions on camping in national parks and reserves, contact Parks Victoria for further information.

Do fees apply? Must I book a site?

Camping in State forest is generally free. Where fees apply (ie. Murrindindi Scenic Reserve near Toolangi), the revenue raised is reinvested in the facilities on site.

Camping is on a first-come first-served basis and no bookings are required, but early arrival may be advisable during peak periods and at popular locations.

Can I take my dog?

Dogs are generally (with some small exemptions) allowed in State forest (see map), but must be under direct control at all times and are expected to be kept on a leash in picnic and camping areas or when near other visitors.

People with impaired vision are generally exempt from the restrictions placed on dogs in forest areas.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information and maps about where to go in State forest, contact DSE's Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Parks Victoria Contacts

For further information about where to go in national parks and reserves, contact the Parks Victoria hotline on ☎ 131963.

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry".

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