

Driving on unsealed roads

- Engage 4WD and lock hubs when driving on unsealed tracks and in potentially dangerous terrain. Remember to disengage 4WD when returning to sealed roads.
- Travel at speeds appropriate to road conditions. Reduce speeds on dirt roads where potholes, corrugations and loose stones may cause vehicle damage and accidents.
- Adhere to speed limits. The speed limit in parks and reserves is 40 km per hour unless otherwise signed.
- Avoid wet-weather driving. Dirt roads can become impassable, dangerous and easily damaged.
- Take extreme care at creek crossings. Water levels can rise unexpectedly with unknown heavy rains falling upstream.
- On dirt roads, slow down and keep well left when passing oncoming vehicles to avoid possible windscreen damage from stones.
- Keep a safe distance from the vehicle travelling in front of you.
- Pull over and stop when dust limits visibility. Never overtake through a dust cloud, there may be another vehicle coming towards you.
- Look out for wildlife and stock on roads particularly at sunrise and sunset. Slow down when passing birds of prey feeding on road kill as they take some time to get airborne.

Driving through sand

- Engage 4WD and lock hubs when driving in sand and in potentially dangerous terrain. Remember to disengage 4WD when returning to sealed roads.
- A good start is to reduce tyre pressures to around 60% of your highway pressure when driving in sand. You may need to decrease more as optimum tyre pressure in sand varies dependent on the vehicle and load. Always reduce speeds when driving with lower tyre pressures to avoid tyres coming off rims. Remember to reinflate tyres when leaving sandy areas.
- Keep as far left as track conditions permit when crossing dune crests. Lead vehicles should carry a tall flag to warn oncoming traffic of their approach to dunes (flags are now mandatory in the Simpson Desert).
- Maintain a constant speed when driving through sand in low range third or fourth gear or high range second or third gear. Do not apply brakes abruptly as this will bury the front wheels. Do not change direction sharply.

In emergencies

If you become bogged in sand, do not spin the wheels. Remove sand from the front of all wheels and under the chassis. Check your tyre pressure. It is possible to go as low as 11 psi. Jack up each wheel in turn and backfill under it. Lay tracks of sticks or brush and lower the wheels onto that bed. When driving out, release the clutch very gently, initially keeping your revs as low as possible until the vehicle starts to move forward. Maintain a constant speed once you are under way. Remove sticks or brush once out of the bog.

If your vehicle breaks down or is immovable:

- stay calm
- do not leave your vehicle
- radio or phone for assistance if possible
- ration food and water
- conserve energy, remain in shade
- wait for assistance to arrive
- collect firewood to burn with some green vegetation to produce dark smoke, or flash a mirror to attract searchers if you hear a nearby plane or vehicle.

Enjoy your trip

A trip to the outback can be the experience of a lifetime if you are well prepared, make sure a friend or family member knows where you are, and are aware of the potential risks you may face out there.

Remember that these risks can quickly increase outside the peak tourist season as the temperature rises (temperature regularly exceeds 40°C) and the number of other people on the road substantially reduces.

This brochure is provided for visitors undertaking day trips or short stays in South Australia's Desert Parks.

For more extensive travels, the Desert Parks Pass is a 12-month pass which allows access and camping in South Australia's Desert Parks. The pass includes the maps necessary to visit the area, as well as extensive information on the parks and requirements for safe travel through this outback region of South Australia.

If you have any further questions before heading out, contact the **Desert Parks Pass Administration Officer** to find out more on **(08) 8648 5328** or email desertparks@sa.gov.au

The national parks code

Help protect your national parks by following these guidelines:

- Leave your pets at home.
- Take your rubbish with you.
- Observe fire restrictions, usually 1 November to 30 April. Check CFS hotline 1300 362 361.
- Conserve native habitat by using liquid fuel or gas stoves.
- Camp only in designated areas.
- Respect geological, cultural and heritage sites
- Keep our wildlife wild. Do not feed or disturb animals, or remove native plants.
- Keep to defined vehicle tracks and walking trails.
- The use of generators and chainsaws are not permitted
- Be considerate of other park users.

Thank you for leaving the bush in its natural state for the enjoyment of others.

Local emergency numbers

Police 000 or 131 444

Ambulance 000

Fire 000

Further information

Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources,
SA Arid Lands Region
PO Box 78
Port Augusta SA 5700

**Desert Parks Pass
Administration Officer**
Phone: (08) 8648 5328


Phone Information Line
(08) 8204 1910

Email
desertparks@sa.gov.au

Website
parks.sa.gov.au

Join the community

Share your parks at
parks.sa.gov.au

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November 2016 | FIS 94458

Remote area travel information



Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources



**National
Parks**
South
Australia

Outback safety

Please read the following travel information carefully to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable experience while visiting South Australia’s Desert Parks.

Travelling in the remote outback parks and reserves of South Australia can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. It can also be very hazardous with extreme weather conditions, challenging terrain, and isolation from services. Visitors must be well-prepared and equipped to cope with unexpected delays and emergency situations.

The Simpson Desert is closed between December 1 and March 15 annually.

Driving on unsealed roads

For a safe journey it is essential that you are well-prepared and well-provisioned. Careful planning can help to avoid uncomfortable trips, lengthy delays, or potentially life-threatening situations.

You are responsible for your own safety.

Who to tell

- Inform a responsible person of your travel itinerary. Arrange to make scheduled calls and have emergency plans in the event you do not reach locations within designated times. Allow a reasonable time for minor delays.
- Obtain permission from landholders prior to travelling through private or Aboriginal lands.
- Travel with other vehicles or stay in contact with other travellers. In the event of a breakdown or accident, this may reduce the need to use expensive outside assistance.

What to take

Carry adequate supplies of:

- **water** – 6 litres per person per day minimum plus a 3-4 day reserve supply
- **food** – adequate supply for trip plus a 3-4 day reserve supply
- **fuel** – check maps, determine fuel needs and calculate distances between refuelling points en route.

Ensure you carry enough fuel to safely get you between fuel stops that are the greatest distances apart. Frequent low gear and 4WD work uses fuel faster than high gear travel so allow for up to double normal fuel consumption.

- **spares** – at least two tyres and tubes, but if possible take two spare wheels.
- **tools** – long-handled spade, tyre levers, tyre pressure gauge, air compressor, spanners, multitools, screwdrivers, pliers, hammer, electrical tape, WD40, spare fan belt, radiator hoses, coolant, engine oil, transmission oil, spark plugs, fuses, spare fuel filter, fence wire and plastic tubing, etc.
- **recovery equipment** – jack, jack plate, wheel brace, tyre levers, tube mending kit, tow rope, leather gloves, winch, winch sling, tree protector, D shackles, snatch block and straps, jumper leads (booster cables), etc.
- **first aid kit** – travellers should have a well equipped first aid kit. Medical assistance can be days away, so be prepared for an emergency. St John Ambulance provide a range of suitable first aid kits.
- **sun protection** – sunscreen, hat, sunglasses and long-sleeved loose shirts to avoid sunburn, heat stress and heat stroke.
- **communications equipment** – take a satellite phone or HF radio to keep in contact or for emergencies. UHF radio can be used to communicate between vehicles in convoy. EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons) are also recommended for use in emergency situations. Ensure someone in the party has a thorough understanding of how to use these devices.
- **navigation** – maps, compass, GPS.

Weather conditions vary seasonally in the outback. Check weather forecasts and road conditions prior to travel via www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads or by phoning 1300 361 033. Alternatively call the Desert Parks Pass Administration Officer on (08) 8648 5328.

Safe driving in the outback

The safest way to cross the desert is in a well-equipped and well-provisioned four-wheel drive (4WD) vehicle with high ground clearance and an experienced driver at the wheel. Drivers should be familiar with their vehicles, understand vehicle capabilities, and be able to execute appropriate driving techniques to suit different terrains and weather conditions.

Know your vehicle

- Be familiar with your 4WD vehicle. Ensure it is well-maintained, serviced, and roadworthy. It is recommended that your 4WD has high ground clearance if travelling through sand.
- Know how to operate your 4WD transmission before you leave. Know if your vehicle is fitted with locking hubs and how to engage them.
- Inspect your vehicle every morning before you start driving for the day. Check tyre pressures and fluid levels. Clean air filters and the windscreen. Look underneath for leaks and damage to cables and hoses and remove any dry vegetation that could catch fire.

Vehicle access

- Keep to designated public access tracks, parking areas and campgrounds. Vehicles are more likely to get damaged or stranded off-track.
- Mining and petroleum infrastructure is not to be accessed by the public.
- Do not camp in creek beds or watercourses in case of flash flooding.
- Do not camp under trees that may drop limbs.
- Do not drive on salt lakes.

