

Winter Hiking Precautions: What You Need to Know

Winter weather is here! From now through April, visitors can expect to encounter snow, ice, extreme cold, and high winds at Grandfather Mountain State Park and surrounding areas. No matter what the forecast says, hikers should always be prepared for inclement weather.

Park rangers and staff **do not** recommend hiking above Profile View on the Profile Trail or Flat Rock View on the Daniel Boone Scout Trail unless you have experience and adequate gear for the conditions. High winds, cold temperatures and unseen ice are all trail hazards that should be taken seriously. Please do not brave ridgeline trails unless you are experienced in winter alpine conditions and fully prepared for the weather with all necessary gear.

Minimum Gear Necessary for Winter Weather Hiking:

- Ice Traction- Microspikes / Yaktrax / Hiking Sticks
- Extra Water / Energy Snacks
- Thermal long johns and an outer windbreaker jacket
- Extra Clothing Layers (synthetic fabrics, wool, or silk- **not cotton** as it loses heat when wet)
- Headlamp / Gloves / Mittens / Scarf / Fully Charged Cell Phone

Know your limits. Be aware of, and honest about, your present level of physical ability and experience in winter alpine conditions, and what kind of gear you have. Weather and temperatures can change dramatically and rapidly, and you do not want to get caught unprepared. Do not hike beyond your capabilities.

Be mindful that it gets dark early, and temperatures drop quickly at dusk.

Please make sure to check the local weather conditions before your hike. Since we don't have our own weather station, we check raysweather.com, and look at a nearby spot with comparable elevation, such as Sugar Mountain or Seven Devils. <http://booneweather.com/Forecast/Seven+Devils>

If you plan on using the trail access at the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation (the Mile-High Swinging Bridge) make sure to call ahead because they are closed throughout most of the season and their entire facility is closed on December 25. Their front gate can be reached at [\(828\)733-4337](tel:8287334337)

Here are some resources for winter hiking preparedness.

<https://thewinterhiker.com/safety/>

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/112826.html>

Be safe out there!