



Climbing Mount Rainier



Mount Rainier, the most heavily glaciated peak in the contiguous United States, offers an exciting challenge to the mountaineer. This 14,410-foot active volcano is successfully climbed each year by thousands of people. Reaching the summit requires a vertical elevation gain of at least 9,000 feet over a distance of eight or more miles. Climbers must be in good physical condition and well prepared. Proper physical conditioning can offset the effects of fatigue that lead to mistakes and injuries.

Weather and Safety

Weather, snow, and route conditions can change rapidly and can make the difference between a pleasant, rewarding experience and tragedy. Obtain a current weather forecast before beginning a climb at www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/weather.htm. Turn back if weather conditions deteriorate. Severe winter-like

storms on the mountain are not uncommon during the summer. Contact a climbing ranger for updated information on route conditions, crevasses, rockfall, and avalanches by visiting www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm, or by calling 360-569-6641.

High Camps

High camps on the standard routes are Camp Muir on the south side and Camp Schurman on the east side.

Camp Muir (10,188') facilities include a ranger station, solar toilet, and the Muir Public Shelter, which will accommodate about 25 people on a

first come, first served basis.

Camp Schurman (9,702') facilities include a ranger station and a solar toilet.

Climbers must melt snow for drinking water at both high camps and treat or boil their water.

Good Climbing Practices

Experience: Conditioning climbs on similar glaciated peaks, and participation in mountaineering schools are essential for building experience and good judgment. Rescue and first aid training are vital. Don't depend on someone else to help you. Be prepared!

Leadership: The leader should have first-hand knowledge of the ascent and descent routes. He/She is responsible for team members and

their observance of good climbing practices.

Glacier Travel: Climbers should be roped together on glaciers and crevassed snowfields.

Party Size: A minimum of two people is required. A team of three people is better able to effect a rescue or obtain help. For winter climbs, a minimum of four people is recommended. Maximum party size is 12 people.

Climbing Regulations

Climbers must follow **low impact camping regulations**. Camping is allowed only on permanent snow or ice, or on bare ground previously used as campsites. **Clearing new tent sites on rocky or snowfree areas is prohibited**. Travel on established trails to avoid damaging fragile alpine vegetation.

Climbers must **register and pay the climbing fee** prior to climbing, and must check out upon return. Anyone climbing or hiking on glaciers, or above the normal high camps such as Camp Muir and Camp Schurman, must register and pay.

Solo climbers must obtain prior written permission from the Superintendent. A solo

climbing request form can be filled out online at www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm or write to Solo Climbing Request, Mount Rainier National Park, 55210 238th Ave. East, Ashford, WA 98304.

Anyone **younger than 18 years of age** must have permission of his/her parent or legal guardian before climbing above high camps.

Engaging in any business in park areas except in accordance with the provisions of a permit, contract, or other written agreement is prohibited. Leading or participating in an unauthorized commercial climb of Mount Rainier is illegal.

Climbing Fees and Permits

Climbers must register to go above 10,000 feet or to travel on glaciers. Primary registration locations are the Paradise Climbing Information Center, White River and Longmire Wilderness Information Centers, and the Carbon River Ranger Station. The climbing fees are \$50 per person, per calendar year, and \$35 per calendar year for climbers 24 years old and younger. The fee must be paid online BEFORE coming to the park. Access the payment link at www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm. Climbing fees help recover costs for climber safety and education, upper mountain human waste management, and program administration.

An in-park wilderness reservation system is available for climbers and backpackers planning trips between May 1 and September 30. A reservations office is staffed and maintained at the Longmire Wilderness Information Center during the summer months. Beginning March 15, reservations can be made **online only** at www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/wilderness-permit.htm. There is a \$20 reservation fee for advance reservations. This fee is in addition to the climbing cost recovery fee and does not guarantee a spot in the public shelter at Camp Muir.

Human Waste

Each year thousands of climbers summit Mount Rainier. Another several thousand people day hike to Camp Muir. Each person generates trash and uses toilets. The removal of trash and human waste from the upper mountain is an expensive operation. Putting trash and human waste in crevasses or burying it in the snow pollutes park resources and will only delay the problem to be solved by others. Do *not* put litter or trash in toilets. **Be responsible: carry out everything you brought in with you.**

At Camp Schurman and Camp Muir, use the toilet facilities. If you defecate while climbing, use “blue bags” to carry out human waste. Blue bags are available at ranger stations and the high camps. They contain one clear bag,

one blue bag, and twist ties. To use the blue bag, defecate on the snow off the climbing route and away from rest areas. Collect the waste using the blue bag like a glove. Turn the blue bag inside-out and secure with a twist tie. Place the blue bag in the clear bag and secure with a twist tie. **Do not deposit used blue bags in trash cans or in toilets!** Deposit them only in blue bag collection barrels at these locations:

- Camp Muir
- Camp Schurman
- Paradise (in the tunnel of the stone restroom building adjacent to the upper parking lot)
- White River Campground (main parking lot)
- Tahoma Creek Trailhead on the Westside Road (approx. 1 mile above Dry Creek gate)

Winter Climbing

Winter storms on Mount Rainier are frequent and severe, with high winds, deep snow, and extremely poor visibility. Winter conditions generally exist from mid-September to mid-May. All parties attempting a winter

ascent should be experienced in winter mountaineering, avalanche forecasting and rescue, and be familiar with the intended routes of ascent and descent.

Guide Services

One-day climbing instruction, two-day summit climbs, and multi-day climbing seminars are available through:

Rainier Mountaineering, Inc.
(360) 569-2227 / (888) 892-5462
www.rmiguide.com

Alpine Ascents International
(206) 378-1927 / fax: (206) 378-1937
www.AlpineAscents.com

International Mountain Guides
(360) 569-2609
www.mountainguides.com