

The Tahoma News

A Visitor's Guide to Mount Rainier National Park

January through April 2000

Welcome to one of the snowiest places on Earth! The wildflower meadows of summer have given way to a winter wonderland. We've designed this edition of the Tahoma News to help you have a safe and enjoyable visit. See a ranger for more information.

In Case of Emergency
DIAL 9-1-1

Before you enjoy the SNOW here's what YOU should know!

Dress Warmly and Stay Dry

Cold temperatures, wet snow, and wind can easily rob you of body heat. To avoid hypothermia and frostbite, dress warmly and stay dry. Wear layers of wool or synthetics like pile and polypropylene under a waterproof shell. Avoid exposure to wind. Snack frequently, stay hydrated, and take warm-up breaks indoors.

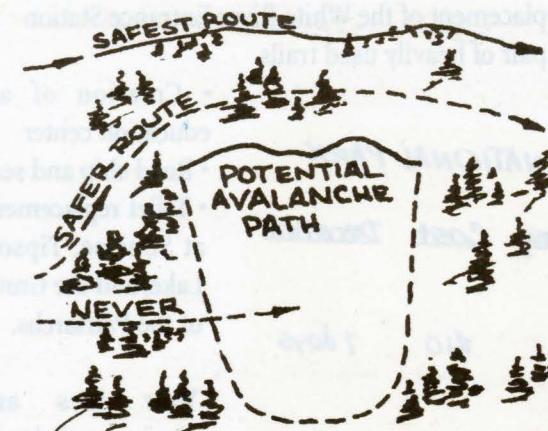


Beware of Avalanches

Snow avalanches are common in winter. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, or climbing in avalanche terrain.

Learn more about safe travel in avalanche country. Consider snowpack, weather, and topography in selecting your route. Ask yourself, "Will this slope slide?" and if it does, "Where will I or my partner go?" Carry an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel.

Remember, even small avalanches can be deadly.



Check today's avalanche forecast at an entrance station or visitor center.

Avalanche Level Descriptions

Slopes between 30 and 45 degrees pose the greatest avalanche danger.

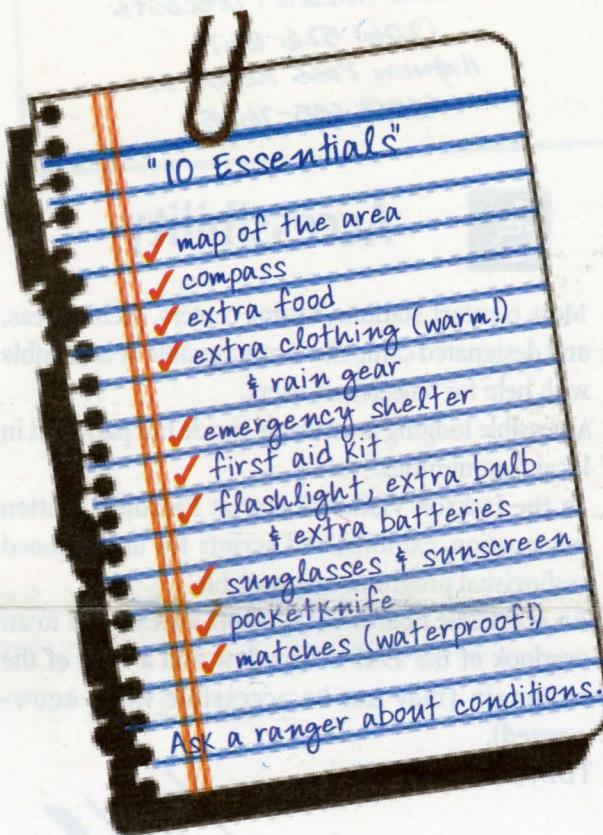
Low: Generally stable snow. Travel is usually safe.

Moderate: Human-triggered avalanches *possible*.

Considerable: Human triggered avalanches *probable*.

High: Natural and human-triggered avalanches *likely*. Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended.

Extreme: Widespread natural and human-triggered avalanches *certain*. **Avoid travel in avalanche terrain.** Confine travel to low angle terrain well away from avalanche path runouts.



Prepare and Take Care

Mount Rainier offers excellent opportunities for exploration and adventure, but sometimes people get lost or injured. Reduce your risk by following these simple guidelines:

Beware

It's very easy to get lost or fall when the weather turns bad or thick fog blankets your route; the trail is covered with snow; you don't have a map, compass, and altimeter, know where you are, and how to get out; and/or you don't know how to assess avalanche hazard and avoid the danger.

Prepare

When hiking, climbing, skiing, or snowboarding, bring the "10 Essentials" listed above and know how to use them. In addition, obtain compass bearings to Camp Muir or other off-trail destinations; carry an altimeter; wear rain- and wind-resistant clothing; and take a whistle, a "space blanket," and a snow shovel.

Take Care

Tell someone your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return. Do not travel alone or in poor visibility.

If you are not truly knowledgeable and prepared, or if the weather is questionable, don't push your luck!

*NEVER feed park wildlife.

Pets are only permitted on roads and in parking areas and must be leashed.

Drive Safely

Beware of poor visibility and reduced traction. Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy even when other sections of roadway are not. Stay alert, use caution, anticipate hazards, and slow down!

Most of Mount Rainier's roads are closed for winter. The road from Nisqually Entrance to Longmire is open year-round, but may close during extreme weather. The road between Longmire and Paradise closes nightly in winter and reopens in the morning once the road has been plowed. The road may remain closed during the day during severe weather. While you're waiting for the road to open, please park in the parking lot, not in a traffic lane.

Drive only on plowed roads in the park. Snowmobiles are allowed on some snow-covered roads. Contact a ranger for information on snowmobile use.

Check current road conditions at an entrance station or visitor center.

Obey Traction Requirements

As road and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. Carry tire chains at all times and obey the posted traction requirement.

APPROVED
TRACTION TIRES
ADVISED

The road ahead has patches of snow covering the road surface. Your vehicle should have approved all-season tires, snow tires, or chains on the drive wheels. Approved traction tires are designated by "M-S", "M/S", "*-*", or "All Season" on the sidewall of the tires. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds GVW and buses may be required to install chains.

CHAINS
REQUIRED
EXCEPT 4WD

The road ahead is snowpacked or icy and drivers can expect some difficulty. Your vehicle must have tire chains (link, cable, or plastic) on the drive wheels. AWD and 4WD vehicles may proceed without chains if they have snow tires on all four wheels, are in four wheel drive, and carry one set of chains in the vehicle for later installation if needed.

CHAINS
REQUIRED
ALL VEHICLES

All vehicles must have chains on the drive wheels.

Welcome...

Welcome to Mount Rainier in winter, a truly amazing season to experience the Cascades. This is the time when the great fire-mountain recharges its store of snow to feed the rivers, creeks, and springs so important to the salmon of the Pacific Northwest. Snow is one of the greatest resources in mountain country because it melts slowly over the spring and summer, bringing water when we need it the most, for fish, for recreation, for power, for farming, and for drinking.



Last winter was a season of records. Mount Baker, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, surpassed our previous world record of 1122 inches of snow set at Paradise in the winter of 1971-72. Our accumulation of 1032 inches at Paradise during the winter of 1998-99 was still substantial. Maybe this winter we will recapture the title!

Snow is wonderful stuff as long as you don't have to plow or shovel it. We do both, a lot of both. Long before you reach the park for a day of cross-country skiing or snowplay, our employees have been working for hours, making the park as safe as we can for your enjoyment. The rest of the safety responsibility is up to you. Snowplay, winter climbing, winter camping, and backcountry skiing are all great ways to experience Mount Rainier. The best piece of equipment you can bring is a healthy understanding of backcountry survival in snow country. If you are new to it, talk with one of our rangers and we will be glad to help you learn how to safely enjoy this great park in winter.

Jonathan B. Jarvis
Superintendent

Geologic Hazards

Recent research has improved our understanding of this active volcano. Although eruptive events are usually preceded by an increase in earthquake activity, other geologic hazards such as mudflows (also known as lahars), glacial outburst floods, or rockfall can occur without warning.

Needless to say, the longer you stay in an area where there are geologic hazards, the greater the chance that you could be involved in an emergency event.

All river valleys in the park are vulnerable to geologic hazards. While most people consider the danger to be relatively low, **YOU must decide if you will assume the personal risk of visiting and staying overnight in these potentially dangerous locations.**

If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley—often described as sounding similar to a fast-moving freight train—move quickly to higher ground! A location 160 feet or more above river level should be safe.

Detailed information is available from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 5400 MacArthur Blvd., Vancouver, WA 98661.

Website: <http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/>

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

- * Reduce your speed.
- * Keep your headlights on for visibility.
- * Allow extra distance between vehicles.
- * Stay well back when following plows.
- * Use low gears, especially when driving downhill.
- * Never stop or park in a traffic lane. Your life may depend on it!
- * Brake sparingly. Pump or squeeze brakes to avoid locking your wheels.
- * Drive in the appropriate lane for your direction of travel. Avoid the centerline.
- * If your RWD vehicle skids: Reduce gas, steer where you want to go.
- * If your FWD car skids: Accelerate slightly and steer where you want to go.
- * Stop in a chain-up area, pullout, or parking lot to install, adjust, or remove tire chains.
- * If parking overnight, do not set your emergency brake. It may freeze.

Mount Rainier Telephone Numbers

General: (360) 569-2211
(Longmire Museum - ext. 3314)
TDD: (360) 569-2177
Website: www.nps.gov/mora

Statewide Winter Weather Reports

Avalanche Hazard Forecasts:
(206) 526-6677
Highway Pass Reports:
(800) 695-7623

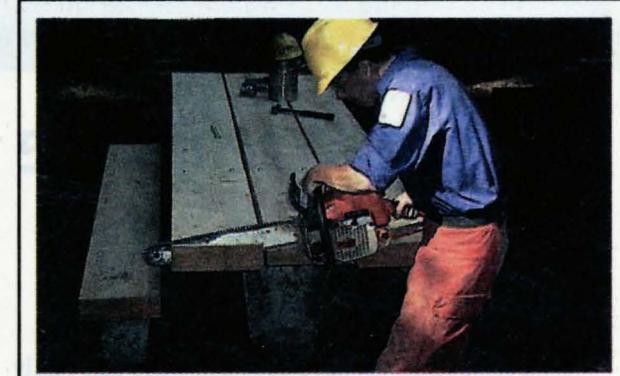
Accessibility

- Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help for wheelchair users.
- Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities.
- In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, written information, exhibits, and scripts for uncaptioned audiovisual programs are available.
- An accessible boardwalk at Kautz Creek leads to an overlook of the 1947 debris flow and a view of the mountain (may not be accessible when snow-covered).
- TDD: (360) 569-2177.

ENTRANCE FEES AND PASSES FOR MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

Type of Pass	Covers	Covers Fees?	Camping Cost	Duration
Vehicle	Everyone in a single, private, non-commercial vehicle	NO	\$10	7 days
Individual	One person (on foot, in a bus, on a motorcycle or bicycle)	NO	\$5	7 days
Annual Pass	Entrance to Mount Rainier National Park for one year	NO	\$20	1 year
Golden Eagle	Covers entrance fees to all Federal fee areas for one year	NO	\$50	1 year
Golden Age	Free lifetime entrance to Federal fee areas for U.S. residents age 62 & over	50% discount	\$10	Life
Golden Access	Free lifetime entrance to Federal fee areas for U.S. residents with disabilities	50% discount	Free	Life

*Call (360) 569-2211 x. 2390 for fee information on tour buses, annual passes, and Golden Passports. There's no park entrance charge for people age 16 and younger.

Your Fees at Work

User fees funded new picnic tables at Ohanapecosh Campground.

UserFee

improves this park

Mount Rainier National Park is part of the Congressionally-authorized Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. The program allows federal land management agencies to increase and retain entrance and user fees. Eighty percent of the fees at Mount Rainier are kept in the park, while twenty percent are made available to other parks in need.

Current "Fee Demo" projects include:

- Completion of the Wonderland Trail
- Upgrading sewage treatment facilities
- Rehabilitating trails at the Grove of the Patriarchs and Reflection Lakes
- Upgrading interpretive exhibits
- Rehabilitating campgrounds

Projects that have been approved for future funding include:

- Replacement of the White River Entrance Station
- Repair of heavily used trails

- Creation of an education center
- Road chip and seal
- Toilet replacement at Sunrise, Tipsoo Lake, and the Grove of the Patriarchs.

Your fees are playing a vital role in fulfilling Mount Rainier National Park's mission to protect park resources and to provide for visitor enjoyment. As you travel around the park, look for signs of your fees at work!

Visitor Services & Activities, Winter 2000

See page 4 for
Winter Hours

Snowplay Area

Sliding and sledding is permitted only in the designated Snowplay Area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise. Runs are constructed when there's 6' of settled snow on the ground. Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other area of the park is ever open to sliding (except skiing and snowboarding). Serious injuries have occurred elsewhere when people have mistakenly slid over waterfalls, into trees, down slopes that were too steep, or broken through thin snow into stream gorges.

Use only inner tubes, plastic sleds, saucers, or other soft sliding devices. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds with metal edges, or other hard devices are permitted.

Compressed air is available on weekends from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Jackson Visitor Center, near the loading dock at the lower level entrance.

Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.

Dress warmly and in layers with a wicking fabric, such as wool or polypropylene, next to the skin and a waterproof outer layer, not in jeans or T-shirts. Wear a hat, gloves, and snow-sealed boots.

Rest, rewarm, drink, and snack frequently. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center (open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends & holidays) before your hands, noses, or ears feel numb.

The Snowplay Area closes by 4:30 p.m. nightly.

Car Camping

Car camping in winter is permitted only in the Sunshine Point Campground, located 0.25 mile east of the Nisqually Entrance (SW corner of park). The campground has 18 sites. The camping fee is \$10 per night. Camping in vehicles is not allowed in parking lots or along roadways.

Snow Camping

Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. Camp well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots, beyond the range of snow blowers! When you finish camping, collapse igloos and snowcaves. Fires are not permitted. Free permits are available at Longmire daily, and at Paradise on weekends only. We request that groups pre-register by calling (360) 569-2211 x. 2390.

Groups of more than 12 people may camp *only* in the immediate Paradise area where there is access to 24-hour restrooms. Others should use blue bags to remove human waste from the park and/or deposit blue bags in a special barrel provided. *DO NOT throw blue bags in trash cans!*

Park in designated overnight parking areas. Do not set the parking brake on your vehicle.

Stay clear of parking lots and roads until morning plowing activities are complete. Before driving downhill, check with a ranger to be sure the road is open and that your vehicle meets the traction requirement.



As one of the snowiest places on earth, Paradise offers great opportunities for winter recreation.



Climbing and Backpacking

Backpackers and snow campers must obtain a Wilderness Permit. Anyone who plans to climb above 10,000 feet or travel onto glaciers must obtain a Climbing Permit. Rangers issue permits from the Longmire Museum on weekdays and at Paradise on weekends. Permits are also available by self-registration at the Wilkeson Ranger Station and at the winter closure of SR410 near Crystal Mountain. For information about guided climbs led by Rainier Mountaineering, Inc., call (253) 627-6242.

Permits are required for all overnight stays in the Wilderness and for travel above 10,000' and/or on glaciers.

Ranger-led Snowshoe Walks

Join a Park Ranger or volunteer for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing and find out how plants and animals adapt to winter at Paradise. Snowshoe walks will be offered daily between Christmas and New Year's Day, and on Saturdays and Sundays only through April 9.

General public walks are offered at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., traverse 1.2 miles, and last for about 2 hours. Walks are limited to 25 people, eight years old or older, on a first-come, first-served basis. A sign-up sheet is available at the Jackson Memorial Visitor Center information desk one hour before each walk.

Organized groups (up to 25 people) may reserve snowshoe walks. These walks begin at 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, inquire at the Longmire Museum or Jackson Visitor Center information desk, or call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3314.

The park can loan snowshoes for the walks for a \$1.00 (per pair) donation to defray the cost of snowshoe maintenance and replacement, or you may join a walk for free using your own snowshoes. Don't forget hats, mittens, suitable boots (you will sink into the snow even

with snowshoes on), sunscreen, and sunglasses!

This is Mountain Lion Country!

Mountain lions, also called cougars or pumas, are reasonably common but rarely observed at Mount Rainier National Park. Consummate hunters, they prey primarily on black-tailed mule deer and elk calves in the western Cascades. Lions are quite large and distinctly cat-like in appearance, with a very long tail. From nose to base of tail an adult male may measure 50", and its tail may be 36" long. Mountain lions generally have gray to reddish-tan fur.

No lion-caused human injuries have occurred at Mount Rainier, although sightings and encounters have increased in recent years. Powerful hunters, lions can pose a threat to people, especially when just learning to hunt or when protecting their young. As humans have moved into relatively undeveloped rural areas in the past few decades, lion attacks have become more frequent. However, attacks on humans by mountain lions are still rare. It's very unlikely you'll see a mountain lion while you're here. If you do, remember:

Children and lone adults are most at risk:

- Don't hike alone.
- Keep children close to you.
- Running or jogging puts you at higher risk.

IF YOU MEET A MOUNTAIN LION:

- DON'T RUN! Stand still and stand together with your companions. Face the lion.
- Pick up and hold small children immediately.
- Stand upright and try to make yourself appear larger.
- Shout!
- If attacked, fight back aggressively.

Please report all sightings of mountain lions as soon as possible to the nearest ranger station, visitor center, or park headquarters at (360) 569-2211, extension 3373 or extension 2334.



Skiing, Snowshoeing, & Snowboarding

Before starting out for the day, check the weather forecast and determine the avalanche hazard. Avalanche information, a current weather forecast, and winter maps that show marked trails and popular unmarked routes are available from visitor centers and ranger stations.

Snowmobiles

A limited number of unplowed roads are designated for snowmobile use. Obtain maps and information at visitor centers.

Never ski or slide on plowed roadways or parking lots. Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.

WINTER HOURS



Visitor Centers

Longmire Museum (Longmire)

Tel. 360-569-2211 ext. 3314

Information, permits, exhibits, book sales.

Daily: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Jackson Visitor Center (Paradise)

Tel. 360-569-2211 ext. 2328

Information, permits, exhibits, movies, book sales, food service, gifts, showers.

Sat., Sun., and Holidays only: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Food service & gift shop: 11 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.



Food & Lodging

For lodging reservations in the park call Mount Rainier Guest Services at 360-569-2275.

National Park Inn (Longmire)

Lodging and dining. Open year-round.

Front desk: 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. daily

Restaurant: 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sun-Thurs.

7 a.m. - 8 p.m. Fri, Sat, & holidays.

National Park Inn Post Office (Longmire)

Open year-round. Closed Sundays and Holidays.

Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday: 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

General Store (Longmire)

Open year-round. Groceries, gifts, firewood. Ski & snowshoe rentals & tire chain purchases are available through early April.

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily

Jackson Visitor Center (Paradise)

Grill & Gift Shop:

11 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. weekends & holidays.

Open daily beginning in early May.

Showers: Open during building hours, located in the basement.



Gasoline, lodging, dining, and other services are available in local communities. A list of these services is available at park visitor centers and on the park's web site: www.nps.gov/mora. Religious services are available in the park and in local communities.

Gas is not available in the park.

Please Recycle!

Mount Rainier National Park has been involved in recycling since the late 1960s. Today, we recycle aluminum cans, plastic (no. 1 and 2), glass, office paper, mixed paper, cardboard, scrap metal, used oil, batteries, and a number of other items.

We also purchase recycled plastic products such as plastic bags, picnic tables, and plastic lumber; paper products made of pre- and post-consumer recycled paper; automobile products; and other products.

Be part of the effort! Please deposit aluminum cans, plastic bottles and glass in the recycle cans located throughout the park.

Reduce Reuse Recycle

From the Mountain to You...



In an effort to reach out to our friends and neighbors, the National Park Service, with funding from Washington's National Park Fund, is offering Ranger programs to local communities. If you would like a Ranger to attend your organization's function, please call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3319.

Thank You Volunteers!

From those of us who recognize both the value of your time and the value of Mount Rainier National Park, a heartfelt **THANK YOU** to each of the 833 volunteers who contributed a total 56,659 hours to Mount Rainier in 1999.

For information about volunteering at Mount Rainier, contact:

Volunteer Coordinator

Mount Rainier National Park

Tahoma Woods Star Route

Ashford, WA 98304

Tel. (360) 569-2211 ext. 2304



Park Planning

Planning for the future of Mount Rainier National Park is a monumental task and responsibility that is shared by park managers and the public alike. You may have already attended public meetings or seen newsletters about the planning process in which Mount Rainier is currently engaged. When completed, the product of this process, a *General Management Plan* (GMP) for Mount Rainier National Park, will outline a broad philosophical approach to managing the park and specify actions that are needed to reach identified goals as we move into the next century.

To be placed on the mailing list for future newsletters, please contact:

Superintendent

Mount Rainier National Park

Tahoma Woods Star Route

Ashford, WA 98304

Tel. (360) 569-2211 ext. 2301

E-mail: mora_supt@nps.gov

*What do you get for
someone who has everything?
How about 235,625 acres of Wilderness?*

*Just \$20 buys the perfect gift for
those hard to shop for people.*

The Mount Rainier Annual Pass

Valid for one year from the date of purchase.

Admits permittee and passengers in a single, non-commercial vehicle.

Non-transferable. Non-refundable.

Not valid for camping fees.

Call (360) 569-2211 ext. 2390 or stop by
the Nisqually Entrance Station,
6 miles east of Ashford, Washington.



NWIA
Northwest Interpretive Association

NWIA operates bookstores in the park's visitor centers and information centers. As a non-profit organization benefitting educational programs in the national parks and forests of the Pacific Northwest, NWIA plays an important role in making interpretive and educational publications available to travelers. It also funds special interpretive projects in the areas it serves.

This quarterly newspaper, the *Tahoma News*, is printed by NWIA for free distribution to park visitors.

For more information or membership, call (360) 569-2211, ext. 3320, or visit NWIA on the web at www.nps.gov/mora/nwia.htm



Washington's National Park Fund

Washington's National Park Fund was created to restore, enhance, and preserve Washington's national parks. The Fund is a private, independent, not-for-profit organization that works with individuals, businesses, foundations and others to secure financial and volunteer support for projects to improve the parks.

In 1999, the Fund supported the following projects in Mount Rainier National Park:

- Roadside assistance. A volunteer provided visitors with emergency roadside assistance this summer, allowing rangers to concentrate on resource and visitor protection duties.
- Expansion of the park web page to include panoramic high resolution digital images representing the significant landscapes of Mount Rainier National Park, along with text about the resources.
- A display about backcountry resource impacts, minimum-impact camping, hiking, climbing, and human waste removal techniques.
- A traveling exhibit to inform the public of the creation of the new park archives as well as the status of major, ongoing park projects.

For information about how you can help with these and other projects, contact:

Jen Benn, Executive Director
Washington's National Park Fund
2112 Third Avenue, Suite 501
Seattle, WA 98121
Tel. (206) 770-0627

Look for donation boxes and contribution envelopes at park visitor centers.



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Mount Rainier National Park

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