

Connemara National Park

Camping Policy

The definition of a National Park is:

A natural area of land and/or sea designated to protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and to provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational, and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

The provision of visitor accommodation is a matter for the communities who live close to the Park. No accommodation services are provided within the Park itself. However, it is recognised that some visitors, seeking a wilderness experience, undertake multi-day mountaineering journeys in the mountains. These visitors may wish to experience “wilderness camping”* in remote areas. Such camping is permitted within the Park subject to a code of practise known as “the Camping Code”. Camping in this context includes bivouacking without a tent. The code is outlined on the reverse of this sheet.

** Only wild camping is permitted in the National Park. Please see the camping code on page two of this policy.*

Requirement for Written Permits

A written permit is required

1. For groups consisting of more than 10 people.
2. When it is proposed to light a campfire, regardless of group size. Applications for campfires require a minimum of one month’s notice. An exact location (Irish National Grid reference only) of the proposed campfire must be provided with all applications.
3. Applications for **1** and **2** (above) should be made to the Park Manager in writing, in person or by telephone (at least seven working days for **1** (preferably longer) before the proposed camping trip).
4. Permit requests for events which include camping should be made at least seven days (preferably longer) prior to the proposed event.
5. Persons camping under permit must produce that permit on request for inspection by members of the Park Staff.

Camping without a Permit

Camping activities other than those listed above are permitted without the requirement for a permit. There is no requirement to inform Park Staff in advance. However Park Staff will be pleased to give useful advice if requested.

National Park Boundary

Visitors should realise that not all the lands in the Twelve Bens Mountain Range and the Connemara region are National Park owned land. The National Park only covers 2,000 hectares, so is relatively small in size. The majority of the lands of Connemara are privately owned, and access to these lands is not a right; it is a matter for individual landowners.

Visitors wishing to camp in the National Park **MUST** check that they are within the Park boundaries by:

- a. Referring to the boundary shown on Ordnance Survey and other maps (eg Discovery Series Sheet 37, Harvey Superwalker Connemara Map)
- b. Enquiring at the National Park Visitor Centre (Tel 095 41 054)
- c. Enquiring at the National Park Headquarters (Tel 076 100 2528).

Connemara National Park *Camping Code*

Important; read the information on the reverse of this sheet for essential background information.

All campers should aspire to minimising their impact on the upland environment by conforming to the following code of conduct:

1. Campsites will be at least 400m^a from a road capable of carrying a vehicle.
2. Campsites will be at least 400m^a from a building.
3. Tents will be moved every second night to allow vegetation to recover.
4. Campers will remove all food waste and litter, whether or not it is biodegradable. Buried waste would be exposed by foraging animals or by erosion.
5. *Latrine Protocol; catholes for disposal of human waste should be located at least 30m away from watercourses and 50m from walking routes. Human waste should be buried or carried out of the site. No evidence of latrine use should remain visible. All toilet paper and hygiene products must be carried out.
6. Campfires are allowed by written permit only, where permitted use mound fires only. Use only sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand, do not cut growing vegetation.
7. Soap and toothpaste must be kept at least 30m away from watercourses.
8. Dish and utensil washing will be conducted at least 30m from water bodies. All wastewater should be strained and scattered. In no circumstances should wastewater used in washing be poured into lakes, streams or rivers.
9. Campers are required to conduct themselves in a quiet manner, disturbing neither the local community, wildlife nor other visitors.
10. Camp-sites must be kept visually unobtrusive.
11. Campsites must be left as found, or better.
12. Failure to comply with this code will result in withdrawal of permission to camp. In such cases National Park Conservation Rangers/Management will demand that the visitors break camp.

^a *Please see map showing camping exclusion zone. Camping is not permitted within the area highlighted. Campers found in this zone will be asked to vacate immediately.*

** For more information on sanitation in the outdoors read "Where to go in the outdoors leaflet" available from the National Park Visitor Centre and the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI).*

This Code has been developed in an attempt to reconcile the conservation of natural and other qualities of the park (such as tranquillity) with the wish of mountaineers to experience wild camping.

Please contact our Visitor Centre, 095 41 054 if you need assistance interpreting any aspect of this code. Comments from members of the public are very welcome.

If you wish to comment, please write to:

The Park Manager
Connemara National Park
National Parks & Wildlife Service
Letterfrack
Co. Galway

Or email us at: cnp@chg.gov.ie

This policy will be subject to review.