

Welcome to Fort Irwin. My name is Ruth Sparks, and I am representing the G3 Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) Program. ITAM works closely with Range Control to support training and take care of the training lands so that Soldiers can continue to train at the National Training Center for a long time to come.

I'm going to talk with you about... maps for the training area, some important restrictions to training, and a few desert safety tips.

Everyone going downrange must have a standard installation map that shows grids, terrain features, training facilities and restricted areas. If you are going downrange, make sure you have one of these maps in your vehicle. If not, please stop by the ITAM office to pick up a copy. In addition to the standard

NTC maps, ITAM also produces special maps to meet specific unit training needs, so let us help.

The National Training Center encompasses about 1200 square miles! Most of that land is available for training and maneuver, but there are some areas where training activities are restricted due to legal requirements or safety hazards, and you must be aware of these. Leach Lake Impact Area is a large area in the northern part of post that is off limits to all ground based activities. The Goldstone Complex in the western part of post is an area that the Army leases to NASA for their Deep Space Communications Program. There is a paved road and a tank trail through Goldstone, but otherwise that area is off limits to training.

In addition to these large areas, there are a number of smaller sites that have various restrictions - some of these are fenced and all of them are marked on the standard NTC map products. There are about a dozen springs on Fort Irwin and all of these are completely off limits to training activity. These springs are not suitable human drinking water, but the springs and surrounding vegetation are extremely important for wildlife, so please leave them alone. The dry lake beds, or "playas," in the bottom of every valley are off limits to vehicle traffic due to air quality issues. There are also many sensitive and expensive infrastructure sites downrange including cell towers, weather stations, and air quality monitoring stations and you need to avoid these sites as well. If you plan to dig downrange, you must complete a dig permit and coordinate in advance with Range Control. And, lastly, Fort Irwin has a wealth of cultural

resources - both historic (from the mining era) and prehistoric (things like arrowheads and rock art). Some cultural sites have been identified and set off limits for protection. It is illegal to disturb or remove any cultural artifacts. And if you find an artifact - something that you think is greater than 50 years old - it's very important that you leave it where you find it, get a grid on it, and report it to Range Control. Please help us by reporting to Range Control or ITAM any damage to off limits fencing as well as any hazardous trail conditions so that we can make the necessary repairs.

I encourage you to explore the Mojave Desert while you're stationed at Fort Irwin. However, there are some things that you need to think about in order to enjoy the desert safely.

Whether you are on a training mission downrange or going out in the desert off post, make sure you tell someone where you

are going and when you expect to return. Remember, the desert is a huge place and, if you don't get back when expected, at least folks will know where to start looking for you. And even if you think you're only going out for a little while, take plenty of food, water, and other essentials. In fact, I'd suggest carrying five gallons of water in your vehicle at all times.

We often get high winds, mostly in the spring, and these can sometimes cause dust storms and brown outs. When driving in these conditions, slow down and increase your following distance so that you have plenty of time to react. During August and September, we sometimes experience summer thunderstorms that can cause flash floods. Stay out of low lying areas and be especially careful when crossing flowing water. Where flowing water crosses downrange trails, there is often a washout on the down slope side of the trail.

Again, welcome to Fort Irwin. Enjoy the desert, be safe, and help us take care of your training lands. Thanks!