

# Backcountry huts



## General information

- The Department of Conservation (DOC) manages over 950 huts throughout the country.
- Huts provide unique places to stay, refuge from bad weather and a place to rest and recover when you are out exploring the many parks and reserves.
- Some date from the late 1800s, but the majority were built during the 1960s and 1970s for deer culling. Since the late 1970s, new huts have been purpose-built for recreation.
- Huts come in all shapes and sizes but have been broadly classified into four categories, which reflect the level of services and facilities provided.
- Can be moved or closed due to extreme weather, which damages access routes.
- Other huts in the backcountry include biodiversity management huts, private bush cabins and recreation club huts.
- Many club huts are open to the public and are listed on the DOC website, and club websites:  
Federated Mountain Club (FMC) [www.fmc.org.nz](http://www.fmc.org.nz)  
New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) [www.alpineclub.org.nz](http://www.alpineclub.org.nz)

## Hut categories

### Great Walk Hut (GW)

These huts are the most comfortable. There are bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses, toilets, a water supply, hand washing facilities and heating with fuel available. There may be cooking facilities with fuel, and a hut ranger on site. Some services may not be available in winter. **Note:** Great Walk Huts require booking. Maximum stay periods apply.

### Serviced Hut (SV) / Serviced Alpine Hut (SVA)

Serviced huts offer bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses, a water supply, toilets and hand washing facilities, and heating with fuel (usually wood stove).

**Note:** Serviced Alpine Huts are only found in the South Island alpine areas. They have higher fees (usually payable at the nearest visitor centre) to assist with the higher costs of maintaining these huts. These huts provide a base for mountaineering activities. A mountain radio is usually provided.

### Standard Hut (ST)

Standard huts have bunks or sleeping platforms, mattresses, a toilet and a water supply. They may have heating. **Note:** Wood heaters are only present in huts at locations below the bush line.

### Basic Hut / Bivvy (B): free of charge

These huts offer very basic shelter with limited facilities and services. Take your own sleeping mat.

### Backcountry Campsites (camping associated with huts)

Campsites with very basic facilities are maintained near many huts. Hut facilities may be used. There are fees for the use of the Serviced Hut facilities.

### Freedom camping

**There are areas where freedom camping is restricted.** See [www.doc.govt.nz/freedomcamping](http://www.doc.govt.nz/freedomcamping) for more information.

Be completely self sufficient and practice no-trace camping. For more information visit the DOC website and [www.leavenotrace.org.nz](http://www.leavenotrace.org.nz)

## Hut facilities and services



Bunks in bigger huts are often sleeping platforms that allow a width of 75 cm per person.



Toilets are usually 'long drop' or composting (not flush).



Candle holders are provided at most huts where lighting is not provided, but you need to take your own candles.

Remember to always take a torch and spare batteries.



Where heating is provided, fuel is either gas or wood and available at some huts in peak season. An axe or saw are often provided at huts with wood heaters.

**Water** is often supplied from rainwater or streams. The water-borne parasite giardia may be present. Boil water for 3 minutes before drinking if you are unsure of the quality.

**Enter your trip details** in each hut book as this information can assist in search and rescue.

**Wardens or rangers** visit huts on a regular basis and check that visitors have the appropriate hut passes or tickets. They also provide information about track conditions, side trips, hazards, weather forecasts (where there is a radio) and help ensure that huts stay clean and tidy. They may also provide interpretation of natural, cultural or historic values of places.

### Backcountry huts do not have

- Any food, cooking utensils, pots, pans—bring your own
- Sheets or blankets—take a sleeping bag
- Rubbish collection—take all your rubbish with you
- Showers
- Toilet paper—take your own

### Peak and off peak seasons

(Dates vary locally depending on conditions.)

- Peak : 1 October to 30 April
- Off-peak: 1 May to 30 September

For details about the exact facilities at a hut and what may have changed, check the DOC website or contact a DOC visitor centre.

[www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/plan-and-prepare/alerts/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/plan-and-prepare/alerts/)

## Hut users code

1. Keep huts clean and tidy. A broom, brush and pan are provided—please use them, and leave muddy boots outside.
2. Conserve gas when using gas heaters and cookers. During cooking always open a window or door to allow dangerous carbon monoxide fumes to escape. Keep an eye on boiling water/food, and be sure to turn gas heaters off overnight and make sure it is properly off when you leave.
3. Take care using wood burners, keep the fire contained and never leave it unattended. Only burn dead dry wood and be careful with hot ashes. Make sure the fire is extinguished before leaving. Use wood sparingly and replace any you use for the next visitors.
4. Share huts with others by being considerate, make room for late comers and keep quiet if others are sleeping. Share boiled water with other trampers to help conserve gas.
5. Carry it in, carry it out—recycle ALL your rubbish. Take two bags, one for recycling and the other for rubbish/food scraps to carry out with you and dispose of responsibly. Refer to the Environmental Care Code on the DOC website.
6. No smoking in huts, take your cigarette butts out with the rest of your rubbish.
7. Hunters must follow the Arms Code; see [www.doc.govt.nz/hunting](http://www.doc.govt.nz/hunting).
8. No dogs allowed inside huts.
9. Before leaving, close doors and windows securely.
10. Always pay hut fees.

## Safety and weather

**Safety is your responsibility**— think about weather, equipment and your abilities. Be well prepared for the backcountry and do your research (information can be found at DOC visitor centres and the DOC website).

*Tell someone before you go*

Remember to leave details of your trip (return date and time, planned route, party member names and vehicle license plates) with a trusted contact, and don't forget to let them know when you return. Information on the Outdoor Intentions System can be found at [www.adventuresmart.co.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.co.nz)



Contact NZ weather service: ph 0900 999 + the Area Code (for the place you want to visit)  
Mountain Safety Council & Avalanche warnings:  
[www.metservice.co.nz](http://www.metservice.co.nz)  
[www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz)  
[www.avalanche.net.nz](http://www.avalanche.net.nz)

**In case of emergency, phone 111.**

**Note:** Mobile phones rarely work in the mountains. Consider hiring a personal locator beacon or satellite phone from an outdoor gear/hunting shop.

## Booking huts and campsites

Most backcountry huts and campsites do not require a booking and operate on a first come, first served basis.

### Bookings for Great Walk Huts

Required **all year** for:

- Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk huts and campsites. Book via Te Urewera National Park Visitor Centre [teureweravc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:teureweravc@doc.govt.nz)
- Abel Tasman Coast Track huts and campsites.
- Heaphy Track huts and campsites.
- Rakiura Track huts or campsites

Required **in peak season** for:

- Tongariro Northern Circuit huts or campsites.
- Whanganui Journey.
- Milford Track huts.
- Routeburn Track huts and campsites.
- Kepler Track huts and campsites.

Book at DOC visitor centres, online at [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or by email:

[bookings@doc.govt.nz](mailto:bookings@doc.govt.nz)

Children and youths must still be booked and have a Great Walk Hut Ticket. When booking is **not** required, you will still need to purchase a Great Walk Hut Ticket before you set out. Penalty fees of up to 100% of the adult rate may be charged if pre-purchases are not made for all age ranges.

## Staying in huts and campsites

Pay your fees before your trip by purchasing a Great Walk Pass, Backcountry Hut Pass or Hut Tickets from DOC visitor centres.

### Backcountry Hut Pass & Tickets

You can use the Backcountry Hut Pass, or Backcountry Hut Tickets to stay at huts and Serviced Hut campsites. Purchase the Hut pass and Hut tickets from DOC visitor centres nationwide. The order form and terms and conditions are attached. Passes and tickets can also be ordered online at [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).

**Note:** The Hut pass and tickets are **not** valid at vehicle accessible Conservation campsites and most Great Walk campsites.



Adult	Items
Youth (age)	Signature
Recreation associates (name and number)	
For full terms and conditions of the hut pass visit <a href="http://doc.govt.nz">doc.govt.nz</a> or call 0800 362 468	Expiry date
	Hut Pass number
<a href="http://adventuresmart.org.nz">adventuresmart.org.nz</a>   <a href="http://mountainsafety.org.nz">mountainsafety.org.nz</a>   <a href="http://metservice.co.nz">metservice.co.nz</a>	

## Fees

There are no fees for park entry. Fees are charged per person, per night for the use of huts and campsites and vary depending on the facilities and services provided.

Maintenance of backcountry huts requires a lot of resources. Paying fees helps keep huts available for public use.

To find out more about huts and tracks call into a DOC visitor centre or download free information from the DOC website: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) Feedback is always welcomed: [recreation@doc.govt.nz](mailto:recreation@doc.govt.nz)

## Backcountry Hut Pass/Hut Ticket terms and conditions

The Backcountry Hut Pass is referred to as the Hut Pass, and the Backcountry Hut Ticket as the Hut Ticket. The Hut Pass/Hut Ticket holder is the person to whom the Backcountry Hut Pass/Ticket is issued.

1. The Hut Pass is valid for 6 or 12 months from the date of issue and is only valid for the Hut Pass holder in whose name the Hut Pass was issued.
2. The Hut Pass is not transferable, and is not valid until signed by the Hut Pass holder.
3. The Hut Pass and Hut Ticket fees are not refundable.
4. The holder of the Hut Pass or Hut Ticket is not entitled to exclusive access to a hut or any associated facilities or services.
5. Hut Pass and Hut Ticket holders must comply with all laws, regulations and reasonable directions given by or on behalf of the Department of Conservation or any other lawful authority in respect of the use of huts and associated facilities or services.
6. Hut Pass and Hut Ticket holders should observe the [Environmental Care Code](#).
7. The Hut Pass and Hut Ticket is not valid for use at any vehicle accessible Conservation Campsite.
8. Members of approved recreation associate organisations must produce proof of membership to purchase a reduced price Hut Pass.
9. The Backcountry Hut Pass or Hut Tickets are **not valid for use at the following huts:**
  - Motukawanui Hut, Motukawanui Island Scenic Reserve
  - Lane Cove Hut, Ranfurly Bay Scenic Reserve
  - Peach Cove Hut, Bream Head Scenic Reserve
  - Cape Brett Hut, Cape Brett Scenic Reserve
  - Kaiaraara Hut, Great Barrier Forest Stewardship Area
  - Mt Heale Hut, Great Barrier Forest Stewardship Area
  - Crosbies Hut, Coromandel Forest Park
  - Pinnacles Hut, Coromandel Forest Park
  - Sandy Bay Hut, Te Urewera National Park
  - Orongorongo Valley sole occupancy huts (Papatahi Hut, Haurangi Hut, Tuere Lodge, Jans Hut, Raukawa Lodge, Boar Inn), Rimutaka Forest Park
  - Angelus Hut, Nelson Lakes National Park (from late November to 30 April plus Labour weekend and Queen's Birthday weekend)
  - Welcome Flat Hut, Westland Tai Poutini National Park
  - Godley Hut, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park
  - Esquilant Bivy Hut, Mt Aspiring National Park
  - All Serviced Alpine huts
  - All Mt Aspiring and Westland Tai Poutini National Park NZAC huts
  - All private or club huts on DOC managed land
  - Any facility or service booked via the National Visitor Booking System (NVBS)
10. The Backcountry Hut Pass or Hut Tickets are **not valid** for use at the Great Walk huts and campsites on:
  - Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk
  - Whanganui Journey
  - Abel Tasman Coast Track
  - Heaphy Track
  - Rakiura Track
  - Tongariro Northern Circuit (October-May)
  - Routeburn Track (October-April)
  - Milford Track (October-April)
  - Kepler Track (October-April)
11. The Backcountry Hut Pass and Hut Tickets are invalid if tampered with.
12. The terms and conditions of the Hut Pass and/or Hut Ticket, including the list of huts and campsites that are excluded, may be subject to change at any time and without prior notice. It is the responsibility of the holder of the Hut Pass and/or Hut Ticket to check the terms and conditions for any changes.