

Skyline Watershed Ridge Trail Permit

Frequently Asked Questions

About the permit

Why do I need a permit?

The Peninsula Watershed is an important part of the Hetch Hetchy Regional Water System which provides clean, reliable drinking water to 2.7 million people in four Bay Area counties. The watershed also provides critical habitat for native plants and wildlife. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) provides public access to the watershed in a way that protects water quality, sensitive habitats, and the species that depend on them. The free annual permit helps SFPUC manage public access to the Skyline Watershed Ridge Trail while supporting safe, responsible recreation and stewardship of the watershed.

What does the permit allow me to do?

Obtaining a permit allows you to visit the Skyline Watershed Ridge Trail seven days per week for self-guided hikes, bike rides, runs, or horse rides. The trailhead gate will be open 6am – 6pm. You may enter any time during those hours. If inside the gate after 6pm, drive up to the sensor for the gate to open or press the exit button.

Who needs a permit?

Everyone visiting the trail must have a permit or be a guest of a permit holder. Each permit holder can bring up to six guests. Guests do not need to be registered under the permit holder's account and can change with each visit.

Do I need a new permit for each visit?

No. Your permit is good for the calendar year.

Do I need a permit for parking?

No. Parking is limited and available first come, first serve. You do not need to show your permit to get inside the gate or display on your dashboard.

Getting your permit

How do I get a permit?

There are two steps – creating an account and enrolling in the permit. [View our Step-by-Step Guide for help.](#)

Why does the website ask me to join a membership?

The permit uses the “membership” feature in the system. There are no subscriptions or fees. Trail permits are always free.

Finding and showing your permit

Where do I find my permit?

After you successfully enroll, you'll receive an email confirming that you have joined the Skyline Watershed Ridge Trail permit membership. This email serves as your proof of enrollment. You will not be emailed a copy of the full permit. You can also verify that you are enrolled in the permit by viewing forms under your profile. [View this guide for help.](#)

How do I show proof of my permit?

In the event you are asked if you have a permit, you can simply let our staff know you have signed up. You may use your confirmation email or screenshot of your enrollment as proof.

Do I need to print the permit, or can I save it to my phone?

You do not need to carry a physical permit. Your email confirmation or screen shot of your enrollment will serve as proof.

What if I don't have cell service at the trailhead?

Cell service is available along most of the trail. If you are having trouble with connection, walk a few feet and you are likely to regain service.

After you enroll in the permit**Will I be contacted, and why?**

SFPUC will contact you in the event of a trail closure, planned maintenance, or to remind you to renew your permit. Your email will not be shared or used for marketing purposes.

What should I do if I don't receive my permit confirmation email?

First, check that you've enrolled in the permit. [Here's the guide](#) to finding the permit under your profile. If you are enrolled, check your spam folder in your email. Confirmation emails are sent from SFPUC Watersheds.

Visiting the trail**Will I be asked to show my permit?**

Watershed staff patrolling the trail may ask to see your permit.

Can I transfer my permit to someone else?

No. You may add family members to your household under your profile or the person can sign up for their own membership. Permits are not limited and are free.

Can I bring guests using my permit?

Each permit holder can bring up to six guests. Guests do not need to be registered under the permit holder's account and can change with each visit.

Additional questions or need support? Contact us at ridgetrail@sfwater.org.