



TO: VISITORS TO MAGDALENA RIDGE OBSERVATORY IMPORTANT MEDICAL ALERT AND LIABILITY RELEASE

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY, SIGN THE FORM, AND RETURN IT TO web@mro.nmt.edu

Magdalena Ridge Observatory is located in the Magdalena Mountains of the Cibola National Forest in Socorro County, New Mexico, at an elevation of approximately 10,600 feet. The drive to the Observatory is over roads that are narrow, winding, unpaved, and subject to weather-related hazards. Ascent to this elevation exposes you to a reduction in atmospheric pressure, which can result in a variety of medical conditions, including altitude sickness which can cause severe illness or even death.

Conditions at the Observatory can be extreme throughout all 12 months of the year; the weather can change dramatically and quickly. You are responsible for wearing attire that is appropriate for the time of your visit. We recommend the following: in the winter wear or bring insulated boots, gloves, warm headgear, and layered thermal clothing; in the summer wear or bring a wide brimmed hat, wind and waterproof shell with hood, and an extra sweater; in all seasons wear or bring sturdy shoes, sunscreen, and have sunglasses and lip balm available. In addition, we recommend that you carry water with you at all times, have at least some emergency rations such as granola bars or trail mix available, and in the winter bring a vacuum flask with a hot beverage. To help prevent altitude sickness, we recommend that you stay hydrated, keep warm, refrain from heavy meals, coffee, alcohol, and tobacco before and during your visit, and avoid strenuous exercise or activities.

Mild altitude sickness is common. Experts do not know who will get it and who will not. Neither your fitness level nor age nor gender plays a role in whether or not you experience altitude sickness. Visitors to the Observatory may suffer headaches, dizziness, drowsiness, irritability, nausea, reduced intellectual capacity, impaired exercise tolerance, and possibly vomiting. Your symptoms may be mild to severe, and may not start until a day after you have been at a high altitude. It is also possible to develop one of the more severe altitude sicknesses, pulmonary or cerebral edema, both of which can be fatal. The altitude may aggravate a pre-existing disease, particularly cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

Anyone experiencing any of these symptoms must immediately be transported down the mountain. The only cure for altitude sickness is to descend to a lower altitude.

In an emergency, please note that the Socorro emergency services will not drive up to the Observatory due to the difficulty in driving emergency vehicles and ambulances up and down Forest Road 235. They will only drive as far as Water Canyon, which is 8 miles down from the Observatory, so it is your responsibility to take anyone in need of treatment down the road at least as far as Water Canyon or into Socorro.

Assumption of Risk, Covenant Not To Sue, and Release of Claims. Knowing the risks described above, and in consideration of being permitted to visit the Magdalena Ridge Observatory, I agree, on behalf of my family, heirs, and personal representative(s), to assume all the risks and responsibilities surrounding my visit. To the maximum extent permitted by law, I release, indemnify, and covenant not to sue New Mexico Tech, Magdalena Ridge Observatory, and their respective officers, employees, volunteers, and representatives from and against any present or future claim, loss, or liability for injury to person or property which I may suffer, or for which I may be liable to any other person, during my visit (including periods in transit).

I have carefully read the Release Form before signing it. No representations, statements, or inducements, oral or written, apart from the foregoing written statement, have been made.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____
