



## Help Us Preserve Freedom Plaza and McPherson Square

National Mall and Memorial Parks – National Park Service



November 23, 2011

The National Park Service has a long and proud tradition of providing opportunities for the exercise of First Amendment rights. The national parks of Washington, DC are used almost every day as places for demonstrations as well as for the enjoyment and use of other park visitors. The National Park Service is also required to protect our important cultural and natural resources. To help you help us with that responsibility and ensure your compliance with park regulations, we are providing this additional reminder for visitors using the parks regardless of the reason for their visit.

While the National Park Service has provided additional trash receptacles and emptied them at least three times per day at Freedom Plaza and McPherson Square, problems associated with inappropriate food storage and disposal has resulted in rodent sightings. While the National Park Service has placed rodent traps in these parks, people should renew efforts to have their trash and debris cleared and placed in park trash receptacles at the conclusion of each day's events. The United States Park Police remains committed to ensuring safety within these parks and will increase their patrol activities, especially due to increasing problems of public urination and defecation, illegal drug and alcohol use, and assaults.

Camping continues to be prohibited. Camping is defined at 36 CFR § 7.96(i)(1) as "the use of park land for living accommodation purposes such as sleeping activities, or making preparations to sleep (including the laying down of bedding for the purpose of sleeping) or storing personal belongings, or making any fire, or using any tents or shelter or other structure or vehicle for sleeping or doing any digging or earth breaking. . . "

The use of temporary structures for camping continues to be prohibited. 36 CFR § 7.96(5)(iv) allows temporary structures as part of a permitted demonstration "for the purpose of symbolizing a message or meeting logistical needs such as first aid facilities, lost children areas or the provision of shelter for electrical and other sensitive equipment or displays." However, "[t]emporary structures may not be used outside designated camping areas for living accommodation activities such as sleeping, or making preparations to sleep (including the laying down of bedding for the purpose of sleeping), or storing personal belongings, or making any fire, or doing any digging or earth breaking or carrying on cooking activities. The above-listed activities constitute camping when it reasonably appears, in light of all the circumstances that the participants, in conducting these activities, are in fact using the area as a living accommodation regardless of the intent of the participants or the nature of any other activities in which they may also be engaging..." In addition, to allow for visual inspection and monitoring, all temporary structures must continue to have at least one open side.

National Park Service rangers will be distributing this Notice to persons in both parks as well as each temporary structure. The Notice will also be posted in both parks. National Park Service rangers and United States Park Police officers will continue to monitor the activities within the park, to ensure compliance with health and safety issues and to answer questions. Your cooperation is appreciated.

If you have any questions, or would like a copy of the Notice, please contact Robbin Owen, Chief, Permits Management at 202-245-4715. A copy of this Notice has been posted on the park's website at [www.nps.gov/nacc/parkmgmt](http://www.nps.gov/nacc/parkmgmt).