



MAUNA KEA SUMMIT INFORMATION

Preparing for Summit Weather

If you are planning to join a tour to the summit of Mauna Kea, please remember that you will be traveling to 13,800 feet and should be prepared for the altitude and cold. At this altitude, weather conditions can change radically in very short period of time. For this reason, we suggest that you prepare for high mountain weather conditions which may suddenly deteriorate to 20°F, with 70-mph winds and blowing snow. For your comfort you should bring the following equipment:

- wool hat
- mittens or gloves
- long underwear (tops and bottoms)
- wool sweater
- long pants
- wind-proof jacket
- sturdy walking shoes and wool socks
- sun screen and lip protection – the extra ultraviolet at 13,800 feet burns quickly
- dark sunglasses – snow blindness can occur very quickly

Stay Warm! Remember, you can always take extra clothes off, but you cannot put them on if you do not bring them.

In addition to climatic considerations, the problem of altitude must be addressed. Since you will ascend and descend quickly, long-term effects and severe altitude sickness are not usually problems. However, you will probably feel short-term effects such as light-headedness, shortness of breath, headache, increased frequency of urination, increased flatulence, and dehydration. In order to minimize the potential discomforts, the following precautions are suggested:

- To avoid dehydration, drink as much liquid as possible 24 hours before, during, and for 12 hours after your trip to the summit. Avoid drinking alcohol before the trip. Alcohol is **not allowed** above the 9,000-foot level of Mauna Kea
- Avoid gas-producing food the day before and the day of your trip (i.e., beans, starches, cabbage, onion, soft drinks).
- Stop smoking 48 hours before ascent to allow the carbon monoxide in your bloodstream to dissipate; you will need all the oxygen your system can get.
- Do not over-exert yourself at the summit.

- Do not go to the summit within 24 hours of scuba diving.

If you remember these simple steps, you will be able to enjoy your trip rather than worrying about freezing fingers or sunburnt lips, and your visit will be both exciting and memorable.