



## Table Of Contents

### The Game

- What is geocaching?
- How is the game played?
- What are the rules of geocaching?
- What do I need to go geocaching?
- Where are geocaches located?

### Getting Started

- What kind of cache should I look for on my first adventure?
- Searching for geocaches
- Loading coordinates onto your GPS device

### Finding Geocaches

- What does a geocache look like?
- What's usually in a cache?
- What should not be placed in a cache?
- How do I find the cache and what should I do once I've found it?
- Can I move a cache once I find it?
- What should I do if I discover a cache has gone missing?
- How do I log my find?

### Hiding Geocaches

- Who hides geocaches?
- How do I hide a geocache?
- When I submit a new cache for publication, how long will it take to be listed?
- Does Geocaching.com or a volunteer physically check the cache placement before the listing is published?

## Signal the Frog

If you spend a bit of time geocaching, chances are you'll see a frog with an antenna attached to his head. This is Signal the Frog, the official Geocaching mascot.

### History

Signal was created in the early days of Geocaching.com as a way to represent the combination of technology and nature. Since then, Signal has become beloved by the geocaching community and appears on geocaching-related gear, trackables—and even in-person at some Mega-Events. If you see him, make sure to give him a high-five and discover his tracking code.

If you'll notice, Signal isn't just a frog, he's a frog with an antenna attached to his head. We searched through the animal kingdom and we couldn't find any other antenna-enabled animals besides Signal, so the choice was easy.



### Phone a Friend (PAF)

PAF is simply a list of phone numbers of local geocachers that are willing to lend a hand to any cacher out on the trail.

### Facebook Pages

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Alabama Geocachers Association   | Birmingham Area Cachers |
| Coastal Alabama Geocachers       | River Region Geoachers  |
| You Might Be a Geocacher If..... | Caching Folks           |
| Georgia Geocaching Association   | Mississippi Cachers     |
| Geocaching 101                   |                         |

These are just a few groups that you can get involved with.

## Geocaching Adventures



## Trackables

- What are Trackables?
- What should I do when I find a Trackable?
- How do I log a Trackable?
- Where do I get my own Trackable?
- How do I activate a Trackable?
- Geocoin FAQ
- Travel Bug® FAQ

## What does...mean?

- What does this word or acronym mean?
- What does this icon mean?
- What's in a Name?
- How is geocaching pronounced?
- What is the meaning of the word geocaching?

## GPS

- What is a GPS device?
- How does GPS work?
- If I use a GPS device, can someone track where I am going?
- What features

## Geocaching Rules and Etiquette for hiding and seeking caches

Placement Guidelines – Govern the physical location of a geocache.

Listing Guidelines – Covers the requirements that you, as a geocache owner, need to adhere to in order for your geocache to be successfully published on Geocaching.com.

## The Game

### What is geocaching?

*Geocaching is whatever YOU want it to be for you – for whatever you get out of it in the way of personal satisfaction. Geocaching is a High-Tech Game where YOU are the Search Engine.*

### How is the game played?

*Go on-line to [Geocaching.com](http://Geocaching.com) to search for caches in an area you wish to conduct a geo-hunt. Select caches based on location, type, or GC #.*

### What are the rules of geocaching?

*See [Rules & Etiquette](#)*

### What do I need to go geocaching?

*Requires a unique user-id similar to old CB Handles or Internet names, a password and on-line access to [Geocaching.com](http://Geocaching.com).*

### Where are geocaches located?

*Everywhere! Geocaches are located all over the world. Chances are one is just down the road from where you are. Locations include city parks, public locations and even private property with the owner's permission.*

## Hiding Geocaches

### Who hides geocaches?

*Caches are hidden by your fellow geocachers. You too, can hide your own cache for others to find.*

### How do I hide a geocache?

*Find a location to hide a cache. Select a container to use and a name you like. Mark the coordinates and then using your [Geocaching](http://Geocaching.com) user-id, go on line at [Geocaching.com](http://Geocaching.com) and fill out the [Hide-A-Cache](#) form online.*

### When I submit a new cache for publication, how long will it take to be listed?

*Once you submit a cache for review, it could take anywhere from a day to a week or two to be published. The length of time it takes depends upon the schedule of the volunteer reviewer for your area.*

### Does [Geocaching.com](http://Geocaching.com) or a volunteer physically check the cache placement before the listing is published?

*The simple answer is no. Reviewers check the information you submit and make sure your submission meets the requirements for hiding a cache. However, by reading the logs of other cachers that find your cache, you can tweak your description, difficulty levels, etc.*

## Geocaching Listing Requirements & Guidelines

### Listing Guidelines for All Geocaches

1. Listing must contain accurate GPS coordinates.
2. Geocache listings that require additional website registration, installs or downloads are generally not publishable.
3. Geocache owner (CO) is responsible for geocache listing maintenance.
4. Geocache owner is responsible for visits to the physical location.
5. Geocache containers include a logsheet or logbook.
6. Geocache contents are family friendly and suitable for all ages.
7. Geocache contents are appropriate for outdoor life. (Do not place food or scented items in a cache).
8. Geocaches do not solicit for any purposes.
9. Commercial geocaches are disallowed.
10. Geocaches must be in place before you enable the listing.

# Geocaching Listing Requirements & Guidelines

## Fundamental Placement Guidelines

1. All local laws and documented land management policies apply.
2. Be sure that you have the landowner's and/or land manager's permission before you hide any geocache, whether placed on private or public property.
3. Geocaches are never buried, neither partially nor completely.
4. Geocache placements do not damage, deface or destroy public or private property.
5. Wildlife and the natural environment are not harmed in the pursuit of geocaching.
6. Geocaches are not placed in restricted, prohibited or otherwise inappropriate locations.
7. Physical elements of different geocaches should be at least 0.10 miles (528 ft or 161 m) apart.
8. Geocaches are allowed in space, on other planets and in spacecraft.

## Other Placement Considerations

1. Select an appropriate location and container.
2. Label your geocache.

## Getting Started

### What kind of cache should I look for on my first adventure?

*On your first geo-hunt, I would recommend going for an easy one. Difficulty and Terrain level of 1 to 1.5 stars or less. I would also recommend a larger container type, not a micro. A magnetic keyholder on a guardrail or a pill bottle under a lampskirt is probably best.*

### Searching for geocachers

*Use stealth, your brains, and your natural geosense when looking for a cache. The more you cache, the easier it will become..*

### Loading coordinates onto your GPS device

*Use the website and your owner's manual for loading caches into your GPS.*

## Finding Geocaches

### What does a geocache look like?



Magnetic Keyholder

Matchtube

Bison (Pill FOB) Tubes

Ammo Cans

### What's usually in a cache?

*With the exception of Earthcaches and Virtuals, all caches should contain a log as a minimum. Larger caches, such as Ammo Cans and Tupperware containers may contain trinkets and Travel Bugs.*

### What should not be placed in a cache?

*Perishable items such as food, dangerous items such as knives nor adult items*

### How do I find the cache and what should I do once I've found it?

*Armed with a cache's information, conduct a stealthy search of the area – known as ground zero. Once you find the cache, sign the log and when time permits, describe your hunt on-line. This goes for Did Not Find (DNF) as well.*

### Can I move a cache once I find it?

*NO! You should always return a cache to its original hiding spot.*

### What should I do if I discover a cache has gone missing?

*Post a "Needs Maintenance" entry when logging your DNF.*

### How do I log my find?

*Go on-line at Geocaching.com, look up the cache (use the GC number or Cache Name) and click on Log Your*

## Trackables

### What are Trackables?

A Trackable is a sort of physical geocaching "game piece." There are three main types of Trackables: Travel Bug® Trackables, Geocoins and other Trackables.

A **Travel Bug** is a trackable tag attached to an item that geocachers call a "hitchhiker." Each Travel Bug has a goal set by its owner. Goals are typically travel-related, such as to visit every country in Europe or travel from coast to coast. Travel Bug Trackables move from cache to cache with the help of geocachers like you. See the "What do I do when I find a Trackable?" section of the guide for information on how you can help Trackables move.

**Geocoins** are customizable coins created by individuals or groups of geocachers as a kind of signature item or calling card. They function exactly like Travel Bug Trackables and should be moved to another cache, unless otherwise specified by their owners.

**Other Trackable items** come in various forms including patches, key rings and more. A common feature of Trackable items is that they bear a unique ID code and text noting that they are trackable at Geocaching.com.

### What should I do when I find a Trackable?

1. Move the Trackable - If you would like to move the Trackable to another cache, take it with you. You do not need to leave anything in its place as long as you are willing to help it on its journey.
2. Log that you Moved the Trackable  
When you take a Trackable from one cache and drop it into another, it is important to log the Trackable's movements.

### How do I log a Trackable?

*Much the same as logging a cache. Go online and click on "Play" go down to Find Trackables and following the instructions.*

### Where do I get my own Trackable?

*You can purchase them from stores that carry Geocaching supplies. Many stores are advertised on the Geocaching website.*

## Container Sizes



**Micro** - Less than 100ml. Examples: a 35 mm film canister or a tiny storage box typically containing only a logbook or a logsheet. A nano cache is a common sub-type of a micro cache that is less than 10ml and can only hold a small logsheet.



**Small** - 100ml or larger, but less than 1L. Example: A sandwich-sized plastic container or similar.



**Regular** - 1L or larger, but less than 20L. Examples: a plastic container or ammo can about the size of a shoebox.



**Large** - 20L or larger. Example: A large bucket.










**Other** - See the cache description for information.



For the Beginner or Novice  
First geo-hunt & what to go for

## Stop-n-Go GC2WT9B


<b>Cache Type:</b> 	<b>Difficulty</b> Rating of 1 
<b>Cache Size:</b> Regular or  Large 	<b>Terrain</b> Rating: 1 – 1.5 

**Helpful suggestions:** You should also check to see that other geocachers have recently logged finds on the cache page (also called the cache listing). Look for the date **Last Found**. This will provide an indication whether or not the geocache is most likely still in place and findable.  Find logs are indicated on the cache page with a smiley face.  DNF's or Did Not Find Frownies can also be found in cache logs.

### What does this word or acronym mean?

Hitchhiker, BYOP, TFTC, and so forth - there are a number of unique terms in geocaching you may not know if you're still a "muggle." Check out the glossary on the website for a complete list.

### What does this icon mean?





There are a lot of icons in the world of geocaching. Here the ones you are likely to see the most:  **Favorite Points** - The blue ribbon identifies how many Favorite Points a cache has received. Favorite Points are awarded by Geocaching.com Premium Members to the caches they have enjoyed most.

<b>Decryption</b>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
<b>Key</b>	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z





## Glossary of Terms

<b>Archive</b>	Dead Cache that is longer active.
<b>Bookmark List</b>	A Premium Member feature used to list caches such as those you own or may want to find.
<b>BYOP</b>	Bring Your Own Pen/Pencil.
<b>Cache</b>	Short for geocache, the actual hidden container.
<b>DNF</b>	Did Not Find. Log entry used to state that they did not find a cache.
<b>FTF</b>	First to Find. An acronym used by geocachers to denote being the first to find a new cache.
<b>GC Code</b>	A unique identifier used to identify a specific cache.
<b>Geocoin</b>	A trackable item made into a coin for collecting, trading or sending out into the world.
<b>GPS</b>	Global Positioning System of satellites that determine your location.
<b>GPSr</b>	Slang for a GPS receiver. Equipment used to receive navigation signals
<b>Ground Zero (GZ)</b>	Point where your GPS device shows that you have reached the cache location.
<b>Latitude</b>	distance north or south of the equator. Together with longitude, they create a waypoint.
<b>Longitude</b>	distance east or west of the Prime Meridian. Together with latitude they create a waypoint.
<b>Muggle</b>	A non-geocacher. Name comes from the Harry Potter series' non-magical people.
<b>Premium Member</b>	Premium Members pay an annual fee for added services, functionality and features.
<b>Pocket Query</b>	Special filters used to search for all caches by type, distance, last found, etc.
<b>Decryption Key</b>	Simple geocaching encryption code for encrypting messages such as hints.
<b>Spoiler</b>	Information that can give details away and ruin the experience. It would be like telling someone about the end of a movie before they see
<b>SWAG</b>	'Stuff We All Get.' Basically trade items left by geocachers.
<b>TFTC</b>	<b>Thanks For The Cache.</b> Simply & quick log entry used by many geocachers.
<b>TFTH</b>	<b>Thanks For The Hide.</b> Simply & quick log entry used by many geocachers.
<b>TNLN</b>	<b>Took Nothing. Left Nothing.</b> Simply & quick log entry used by many geocachers.
<b>Waypoint</b>	A physical reference point (coordinates) on Earth. Every cache is a waypoint with its own GC identifier.

## Geocache Types

	<p><b>Traditional Cache</b> - This is the original geocache type consisting of, at minimum, a container and a log book or logsheet. Larger containers generally include items for trade. "Nano" or "micro" caches are tiny containers that only hold a logsheet. The coordinates listed on the traditional cache page provide the geocache's exact location.</p>
	<p><b>Multi-Cache (Offset Cache)</b> - A Multi-Cache ("multiple") involves two or more locations. The final location is a physical container. There are many variations, but most Multi-Caches have a hint to find the second cache, and the second cache has a hint to the third, and so on. An offset cache (where you go to a location and get hints to the actual cache) is considered a Multi-Cache.</p>
	<p><b>Mystery or Puzzle Caches</b> - The "catch-all" of cache types, this form of geocache may involve complicated puzzles that you will first need to solve to determine the coordinates. Mystery/Puzzle Caches often become the staging ground for new and unique geocaches that do not fit in another category.</p>
	<p><b>Letterbox Hybrid</b> - Letterboxing is another form of treasure hunting using clues instead of coordinates. In some cases, the letterbox owner has made their container both a letterbox and a geocache and posted its coordinates on Geocaching.com. If there is a stamp inside a Letterbox Hybrid, it is not an item intended for trade; the stamp is meant to remain in the box so that visitors can use it to record their visit. To read more about letterboxing, visit the <a href="#">Letterboxing North America</a> web site.</p>

## Geocache Types continued....

	<p><b>EarthCache</b> - An EarthCache is a special place that people can visit to learn about a unique geoscience feature of our Earth. EarthCache pages include a set of educational notes along with cache coordinates. Visitors to EarthCaches can see how our planet has been shaped by geological processes, how we manage its resources and how scientists gather evidence to learn about the Earth. For more information about EarthCaches, visit <a href="http://www.earthcache.org/">http://www.earthcache.org/</a>.</p>
	<p><b>Cache In Trash Out Event</b> - <a href="#">Cache In Trash Out</a> is an activity intimately tied to geocaching. While searching for caches, geocachers collect litter along the trails and properly dispose of it. Cache In Trash Out Events are larger gatherings of geocachers that focus on litter clean-up, removal of invasive species, revegetation efforts or trail building.</p>
	<p><b>Event Cache</b> - An Event Cache is a gathering of local geocachers or geocaching organizations to discuss geocaching. The Event Cache page specifies a time for the event and provides coordinates to its location. After the event, the cache is archived.</p>
	<p>A <b>Virtual Cache</b> is about discovering a location rather than a container. The requirements for logging a Virtual Cache vary—you may be required to answer a question about the location, take a picture, complete a task, etc. In any case, you must visit the coordinates before you can post your log.</p> <p>Although many locations are interesting, a Virtual Cache should be out of the ordinary enough to warrant logging a visit.</p> <p>Virtuals are now considered <a href="#">waymarks on Waymarking.com</a>.</p>