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FOREST Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) urges all visitors, including joggers and others who have been frequenting FRIM grounds for recreational activities, to use the main roads as well as designated trails; and not venture off into the forest without permission.

Referring to an article titled *Beating a path to Lagong peak* published by *StarMetro* on July 4, FRIM corporate communications head Norhayati Nordin said the writer might not be aware that she and her companions' activity was illegal and they could have been caught for trespassing.

She said, "Bukit Hari is a restricted area as it is FRIM's plantation research plot. Although there are some designated tracks for mountain biking, the area is a no-entry zone for other recreational activities."

"We are concerned that the article would encourage more people to do the same. So, we want to remind all visitors – joggers, hikers or cyclists, that there are specific areas where they can conduct the respective activities. Even to explore our designated forest nature trails, you must register with our FRIM One Stop Centre and engage a FRIM nature guide for that purpose."

She advised visitors to check out FRIM Visitors' Guide on its website for the dos and don'ts: (<http://www.frim.gov.my/attractions/visitors-guide-in-frim-campus>).

FRIM has refined and translated its recreational guidelines in three languages and made them available online as well as at strategic locations within the FRIM campus.

Norhayati said FRIM had had several cases of visitors getting lost in the forest after they ventured off the designated trail on their own.

The last was in December 2010, when a regular jogger took a path less travelled and after two days of search operations, he was found by an orang asli volunteer.

"Please, we do not want a repeat of such a case. It has happened before, it can happen again. When you venture out of the

Stay on guided tracks

FRIM urges visitors to stick to designated trails, main roads



Follow the guidelines: Visitors are advised to follow FRIM's designated trails to avoid getting lost in the jungle. – filepic

designated route, you put your life in danger. And when you cannot find your way back, you not only trouble others who have to spend time and resources for search and rescue efforts, you also worry your loved ones," she said.

She cautioned that what had happened to a Hasher, who went missing in the jungle of Bukit Hartamas since June 16, could happen in any forest.

Apart from visitors' safety, Norhayati said FRIM was concerned over the destruction caused by hiking activities because there are a number of important or threatened species planted in FRIM which could no longer be found anywhere else in the country.

"Therefore, for safety as well as for the protection of our forest, FRIM advises people to respect its rules and regulations, and

refrain from exploring any forest without proper permission, guidance or preparation.

"FRIM does not want to have to resort to legal action. We would like to appeal to visitors to comply with the restriction. Some say there are not enough signboards to indicate the off-limit areas. It is very simple, other than the roads in FRIM and the Rover Track, all the forested areas are off limits. And you need permission to explore the nature trails," she added.

For details or assistance, call 03-6279 7592/7649 (FRIM One Stop Centre) or email: frim_enquiry@frim.gov.my or check out FRIM's website: www.frim.gov.my

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