



MDRS Travel Information

MDRS is located in Hanksville, UT, a small town in the southern Utah desert. All MDRS crews are required to travel to the station via Grand Junction, CO, the nearest town with good commercial air service. Having a common meeting point facilitates the sharing of rental car transportation between crews, which helps to keep down the transportation expenses associated with running the station.

Once assigned to a crew, contact your crewmates and begin to make your travel plans. Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT) at Walker Field in Grand Junction, is served by five airlines connecting through hubs in Denver, Salt Lake City, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Dallas and Houston. You must plan to arrive in Grand Junction on or before the Friday preceding your mission. That Friday night, you will stay over at the Best Western Sandman Motel near the airport, where the Mars Society has negotiated a competitive rate. Sharing rooms with your crewmates will keep your travel costs down. The Sandman has free wifi internet, a free shuttle service to and from the airport, and a complimentary breakfast each morning.

*Best Western Sandman Motel
708 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction, CO 81506
Phone: 800-568-8520*

A representative of your crew must reserve a rental car from Enterprise Car Rental at the Grand Junction airport, under the Mars Society account. Pick it up either Friday evening or very early Saturday morning. Be prepared to wait a bit for the car – the rental attendant also covers another rental company's counter during the less busy hours, so service and phone answering can be slow.

*Enterprise at Grand Junction Regional Airport
2828 Walker Field Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81506-8660
Phone: 970-254-1700*

Plan to leave Grand Junction early Saturday morning. Contact the crew preceding you before you leave to let them know when you expect to arrive. Load everyone into the car, making a stop if necessary at the Radio Shack or Cabela's in Mesa Mall in Grand Junction for anything you may have forgotten, then drive to Hanksville. The trip will take you about 2.5 hours without stops. Plan to arrive before noon.

Once in Hanksville, pull into the Hollow Mountain service station at the intersection of routes 95 and 24 and introduce yourself to DG Lusko, the expert handyman who maintains and supplies the Hab for the Mars Society. If the earlier crew is not already there waiting for you, contact them from the Hollow Mountain. They'll come out and meet you in the Hab Car. DG's contact info is:

*Hollow Mountain Service Station
60 N Highway 95 Hanksville, UT 84734
Phone: (435) 542-3298*

Saturday afternoon is handover time – Your crew will learn about the Habitat’s systems, equipment, and ongoing scientific research projects from the leaving crew, who should have the place tidy and shipshape for you. They will train you to use the ATV “rovers” and the EVA suits and will help you pick up your crew’s food from the Bull Mountain Market in Hanksville. Once the “handover” is finished, your team will help the leaving crew pack their stuff into the Hab Car and drive to the Hollow Mountain, where they will take your rental car back to Grand Junction that evening.

Two weeks later, at the end of your rotation, you will welcome the next crew coming out from Grand Junction, hand over the Hab to them, and depart late Saturday afternoon or evening for Grand Junction in the rental car they reserved. Back at Grand Junction, you will return the rental car to the airport, stay overnight again at the Sandman, and depart on Sunday for home.