



## Denali National Park and Preserve Commercial Use Authorization Program

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# Commercial Use Authorization Handbook

This handbook provides information to assist new applicants and returning operators in learning about the Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) permitting process and commercial operations in Denali National Park and Preserve (DNA). The authorization language and requirements of each type of CUA can be found in the respective category's stipulations. Additional information and applications forms can be found at: <https://www.nps.gov/dena/getinvolved/commercial-use-authorizations.htm>

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# Summary of Important Dates

January	February	March	April
Application Period Open			
CUAs Distributed			
January 31, 2022: 2021 Annual Fee Balance (% of Gross Receipts) and Annual Financial Report due.			April 30, 2021: Applications to operate in 2022 due.
May	June	July	August
CUAs Distributed			
September	October	November	December
		Application Period Open	
		CUAs Distributed	
		Application period opens in November and closes in April. CUAs distributed November through May	

## F.A.Q .’s

### What is a Commercial Use Authorization(CUA)?

Public Law 105-391, Section 418, which was signed in 1998, provides for the issuance of Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) to a private person, corporation, or other entity to provide appropriate commercial services to visitors of units of the National Park Service. Commercial Services are generally prohibited in units of the National Park Service (NPS) unless they have been authorized by either a CUA or a concession contract.

## What are the general criteria for the issuance of a CUA?

- The Superintendent determines that the commercial activity to be authorized under a CUA: will have minimal impact on park area's resources and values; are consistent with the purposes for which the park area was established; and are consistent with all applicable park area management plans, policies and regulations.
- A CUA is issued to a qualified operator to permit the provision of appropriate commercial services to park area visitors. A qualified operator is an individual or an organization that the Superintendent determines has the ability to satisfactorily provide visitor services and carry out the terms of the CUA.
- The CUA holder must agree to comply with all of the general and specific conditions described in the CUA stipulations for each visitor activity.

## What commercial visitor services are authorized under a CUA in DENA?

All commercial activity in the park must be permitted by the NPS. The following visitor activities, grouped into Service Categories, are eligible for a CUA in DENA. Definitions of each of these services are available on page 7.

### Land-Based Activities

- Guided Day Hiking – Frontcountry
- Guided Day Hiking – Backcountry
- Guided Day Hiking – Kantishna and Wonder Lake
- Guided Overnight Hiking
- Group Camping – Savage River Campground
- Guided Winter Activities

### Air Transportation

- Air Taxi
- Incidental Hunt Transport

### Mountaineering

- Guided Mountaineering

## For what length of time is a CUA issued?

CUAs are issued for a period of one or two years. The application period is November 1 through April 30 of each year. The operating year is from January 1 to December 31.

## What are the fees for a CUA?

### Annual Fees applicable to all Service Categories

A non-refundable Application Fee is due with each application, \$200 for a one year CUA or \$300 for a two year CUA. This non-refundable payment serves as a credit towards the final Annual Fee payment. The final Annual Fee payment is due with the Annual Financial Report. At this time, CUA holders are required to report all gross receipts for CUA operations and apply the appropriate Annual Fee percentage to gross receipts (see table below). CUA holders are required to maintain an accounting system that documents income earned as a result of operating within Denali National Park and Preserve. Please note, for a two year CUA, if a portion of the non-refundable fee is remaining after the first operating year, it'll be carried over to the second operating year.

**Example** – Hiking Services Inc. applies and receives a one year CUA for the Land-Based Activity, Guided Day Hiking Frontcountry. At the time of application, Hiking Services Inc. pays the NPS the \$200 non-refundable Application Fee. Hiking Services Inc. operates throughout the summer and receives \$18,387 in gross receipts for its Guided Hiking Frontcountry operations within DENA. When completing its Annual Financial Report, Hiking Services Inc. will report its gross receipts and have an Annual Fee balance of \$351.61.

\$ 18,387.00	Gross receipts
3%	Applicable Annual Fee Percentage
\$ 551.61	Balance
\$ (200.00)	Amount of Application Fee prepayment with application
\$ 351.61	Final Annual Fee payment due with Annual Financial Report

Annual Fees for Land-based Activities & Air Transportation

A tiered Annual Fee of 3%, 4%, or 5% will be applied to gross receipts on income earned as a result of providing Land-Based Activities and/or Air Transportation within Denali National Park and Preserve. A non-refundable portion of the Annual Fee is due with each application, \$200 for a one year CUA or \$300 for a two year CUA. Please reference the table below.

<b>Annual Fee based on percentage of gross receipts for: Land- Based Activities &amp; Air Transportation</b>	
Between \$0.00 and \$250,000	3% of gross receipts
Between \$250,000.01 and \$500,000.00	4% of gross receipts in addition to the prior amount
Above \$500,000.01	5% of gross receipts in addition to the prior two amounts

CUA Annual Fees for Mountaineering

A flat 6% Annual Fee will be applied to gross receipts on all income earned as a result of providing mountaineering services within Denali National Park and Preserve. A non-refundable Application Fee is due with each application, \$200 for a one year CUA or \$300 for a two year CUA. Please reference the table below.

<b>Annual Fee based on percentage of gross receipts for: Mountaineering</b>	
All income	6% of gross receipts

“Gross receipts” means the total of all revenues received for services within DENA. Revenue collected that is passed directly through to in-park concessioners or other CUA holders (such as air taxi services) may be deducted from gross receipts for the purpose of calculating the percentage of gross receipts fee. Revenue for services conducted outside DENA is not included in the gross receipts amount when calculating the assessed fee.

**Why does the park charge a fee for a CUA?**

Public Law 105-391 and National Park Service policy require the Superintendent to charge a reasonable fee for CUAs. The park retains 100% of the fees to help pay for the cost of the DENA CUA program, including administration, evaluations, monitoring and training.

## What happens if I want more than one CUA?

Businesses may apply for multiple activities within a Service Category for one \$200/\$300 Application Fee. Businesses applying for multiple service categories must apply for a separate CUA for each category and pay the non-refundable Application Fee for each CUA (e.g., an operator applying for a Land-Based Activities CUA and an Air Transportation CUA will be required to pay a \$400/\$600 non-refundable fee at the time of application).

## When are Annual Financial Reports and fees due?

Annual Financial Reports, which cover the operating year and require reporting of gross receipts, are due on January 31 of each year. At that time, the balance of the Annual Fee, based on gross receipts reported in the Annual Financial Report, is due. The minimum Application Fee of \$200 or \$300 is due at the time of the application.

## What are the insurance requirements?

Comprehensive general liability coverage is required for all CUA's. Please refer to the "Minimum Coverage Amounts for Liability Insurance" document for minimum coverage amounts by type of activity. The policy shall be underwritten by a United States company naming the United States of America as an additional insured.

## What are the reporting requirements (deliverables)?

Deliverable	Format	Due Date
Annual Financial Report	AFR Form provided by NPS	January 31
Payment of Percentage of Gross Receipts	Excel Gross Receipt Calculator provided by NPS	January 31
Activity Report	Denali Activity Specific Report Form	January 31

## What are the Activity Reports and when are they due?

CUA holders are required to use the online Visitor Use Reporting system (VURn) at <https://irma.nps.gov/VURn/>. The holder must use VURn to report all commercial activity which took place during the calendar year, January 1 to December 31 within Denali National Park and Preserve. If the CUA holder did not operate in a park unit, the holder must use VURn to report no use/did not operate and meet the Activity Reporting requirement. The Activity Reports must be submitted on an annual basis by January 31<sup>st</sup> following the operating year.

## How long does it take to obtain a CUA?

A minimum of 30 days is required for the issuance of a CUA. Delays may occur if application materials are not submitted accurately or completely. The most common item that may cause delays is the late submission of guide certifications such as required first aid and CPR cards.

## How do I submit an application?

Review all items in the checklist below. Once you have all of the required documentation, you can submit electronically or by mail

The application process, forms, directions, requirements and other related information can all be found at <https://www.nps.gov/dena/getinvolved/commercial-use-authorizations.htm>.

This page also provides a link to pay.gov, through which you can pay your \$200 or \$300 nonrefundable Application Fee.

## Are Entrance Fees required with a CUA?

Denali is a recreation fee park. The CUA driver and/or guide are not charged an entrance fee while working; however, all visitors 16 years and over are required to pay an entrance fee. An individual Weekly Pass for Denali is \$15, valid seven days from date of purchase. The America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes (Interagency Passes) and Denali Annual Passes are accepted for entry. A valid Interagency Pass (prices vary) or Denali Annual Pass (\$45/yr) cover the passholder and up to three visitors in the passholder's party. All visitors 15 years and under are free. CUA holders should check individuals in their groups for passes and ensure everyone pays an entrance fee. Entrance fees can be purchased online, in person at the Denali Visitor Center, or CUAs can establish a Fee Management Agreement, allowing them to collect entrance fees alongside their fees for services. For more information and to determine if a Fee Management Agreement is right for your business, contact the Fee Manager at (907) 683-6437. More information on paying fees at Denali can be found on the website at [go.nps.gov/DenaliFees](http://go.nps.gov/DenaliFees).

## Visitor Acknowledgment of Risks (VAR)

The CUA holder is not permitted to require clients to sign a waiver of liability statement or form, insurance disclaimer, and/or indemnification agreement waiving the client's right to hold the CUA holder responsible for accidents or injury occurring on NPS property. The CUA holder is permitted to request or require a client to sign a form or statement acknowledging risk and/or indicating that certain prerequisite skills may be needed to participate in the commercial activity. The CUA holder must provide the park with the current copy of all forms and/or statements used for this purpose and obtain written approval by the park. A NPS approved VAR can be found on the Denali National Park and Preserve CUA webpage.

## Application Checklist:

Applications must be completed by new operators and by current operators whose authorizations are expiring.

- Complete and sign the CUA Application Form. Submit with application package.
- If applicable, complete the Supplemental for Mountaineering Application.
- Alaska Business License - can be purchased online at this site:  
<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/BusinessLicensing/NewBLOnline.aspx>
- Proof of Insurance – Insurance Certificates must submit the following information or it will delay processing:
  - The US Government is a named additional insured (Your Certificate of Insurance must include a statement verifying the US Government is named as an additional insured on your policy.)
  - The Certificate Holder's address reads:  
United States of America  
National Park Service- Concessions  
P.O. Box 9  
Denali Park, AK 99755

- A.M. Best Identification Number of the insurance company. All insurers must be admitted (licensed) in the state in which the permittee is domiciled.
- The name and address of your business should match the name used on your application and Alaska Business License, to include any Doing Business As (DBA's).

\$200/\$300 Application Fee Payment. Payment can be made online via [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov) (look for Denali NPP Commercial Use Authorization Fees). If submitting by mail please make checks payable to the National Park Service and include your employer ID number oncheck.

## **What happens once I submit an application?**

1. Once we've received all required documents and reviewed your application, we will send you a CUA authorization form for your signature.
2. You will then need to sign and return the CUA authorization form for final approval.

## **Annual Checklist:**

- Submit your Annual Financial Report for the previous year by January 31.
- Submit your required CUA Activity Report for the previous year by January 31.

## Service Category Definitions

<b>Land- Based Activities</b>	
<b>Guided Day Hiking – Frontcountry</b>	Day hiking on approved trails in the park frontcountry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-Purpose Trail</li> <li>• Jonesville Trail</li> <li>• Roadside Trail</li> <li>• Rock Creek Trail</li> <li>• Triple Lakes Trail</li> <li>• McKinley Station Trail</li> </ul>
<b>Guided Day Hiking - Backcountry</b>	Day hiking in areas of the park backcountry. Special provisions apply to Backside Lake and Dunkle Hills.
<b>Guided Day Hiking – Kantishna &amp; Wonder Lake</b>	Day hiking within the Kantishna Backcountry Day Use Area, Backcountry units 41, 42, 43 and select areas around Wonder Lake.
<b>Guided Overnight Hiking</b>	Hiking and carrying backpacks and necessary supplies and equipment with the intent of establishing and staying in temporary overnight camps.
<b>Group Camping – Savage River Campground</b>	Overnight camping in the Savage Campground in designated group campsites.
<b>Guided Winter Activities</b>	Skiing, snowshoeing and hiking on snow.
<b>Mountaineering</b>	
<b>Guided Mountaineering</b>	Activities that involve rock, ice or snow climbing and/or glacier travel requiring the use of ropes, ice axes, harnesses, climbing hardware, crampons, specialized clothing, etc.
<b>Air Transportation</b>	
<b>Air Taxi</b>	Air transportation involving the drop-off and/or pick-up of visitors within park boundaries.
<b>Incidental Hunt Transport</b>	An air taxi for the carriage of big game hunters, their equipment, or big game animals harvested by hunters is only an incidental portion of its' business. The word "incidental" means transportation provided to a big game hunter by an air taxi who does not : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) charge more than the usual tariff or charter rate for the carriage of bug game hunters, their equipment, or big game animals harvested by hunters; or</li> <li>(ii) advertise transportation services or big game hunting services to the public. The word "advertise" means soliciting big game hunters to be customers of an air taxi operator or air carrier for the purpose of providing air transportation to, from, or in the field through the use of print or electronic media, including advertising at trade shows or the use of hunt broker services or other promotional services.</li> </ul>