



Commercial Use Authorization Requirements for Commercial Overnight Backpacking Operators

I. DEFINITION OF COMMERCIAL USE

A commercial use is defined as any or all goods, activities, services, agreements, or anything offered to park visitors and/or the general public for recreational purposes which uses park resources or is undertaken for or results in compensation, monetary gain, benefit, or profit to an individual, organization, or corporation, whether or not such entity is organized for purposes recognized as non-profit under Local, State, or Federal law.

Guided trips or services which collect a fee in excess of the actual personal costs of the trip and/or for payment of other than actual personal trip expenses for guides or leaders, are considered commercial trips. This includes nonprofit organizations providing a livelihood for people through provision of these services.

Groups who are part of a school (and can meet the educational fee waiver requirements), church, family, or non-commercial organization are not required to obtain a permit. A non-commercial organization that is recognized under the Internal Revenue Service Code of Federal Regulations as Tax-Exempt and who can show proof that their activity is not taxable for commercial purposes does not need to obtain a Commercial Use Authorization. The organization must submit their request in writing stating why their proposed activity is not taxable and non-commercial to the Division of Concessions at Grand Canyon National Park along with a copy of their IRS determination letter.

II. INTRODUCTION

These requirements will serve as guidelines for commercially guided backpacking below the rim of Grand Canyon National Park. These requirements describe operations authorized under the Commercial Use Authorization (CUA). In the event of a conflict between the terms of the CUA and these requirements, the CUA will prevail.

CUA's will not be issued to concessionaires to provide services authorized or required to be provided under the terms of current concession contracts.

CUA's are mandatory for conducting commercial trips into Grand Canyon National Park; however, their issuance is a courtesy, not an entitlement. Requests for CUA's are handled in the order received, considering other workload commitments. Four or more weeks should be allowed for this process. Commercial services are not authorized until the CUA is finalized. Prospective permittees should not schedule any commercial trips to the park prior to obtaining a fully executed copy of the CUA.

Failure to obtain and have available for inspection a CUA to provide commercial services into Grand Canyon National Park may subject the commercial operator to penalties as prescribed by law or regulation, including exclusion from the park.

If the commercial operator provides transportation for clients in addition to Overnight Backpacking Services, the operator is required to obtain a CUA for Transportation in addition to a CUA for Backpacking.

All applicants for a CUA will be required to meet the following requirements prior to issuance of a CUA:

- A. Proof of general liability and automobile liability insurance coverage (Certificate of Insurance) naming the United States Government as an additional insured. Minimum acceptable level of general liability insurance is \$300,000 per occurrence. Minimum acceptable level of automobile liability insurance as required by the State of Arizona.
- B. Payment of all required fees: A non-refundable fee of \$350.00 for application and administration of the CUA, irrespective of the length of the CUA. Entrance fees as required at the Entrance Stations.

- C. Proof of Wilderness First Responder and CPR Certification (specific information in Section IV. C.)

All applicants must also meet the following conditions:

III. MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Trip Leader/Guide** - The trip leader/guide will employ a staff with the expertise to operate all services authorized under this CUA. The leader/guide will furnish the park with a list that identifies staff members and their qualifications.
- B. **Park** - The Superintendent manages the total park operation, including CUA's. The Superintendent carries out the policies and directives of the National Park Service. Through park representatives, the Superintendent reviews, supervises, and coordinates commercial activities related to Grand Canyon National Park.

The Concessions staff coordinates the park activities relating to commercial services, and makes recommendations on all commercial operations to the Superintendent. Concessions staff have line authority from the Superintendent to make field decisions, which pertain to commercial operations, and act as liaisons between the permittee and the Superintendent.

Members of the Visitor and Resource Protection Division serve as the direct line of communications to the permittee about backcountry, trail, and corridor use regarding law enforcement, safety, search and rescue, emergency medical services, resource protection, and fire management issues.

IV. STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT

- A. **Guide Registration** - The permittee will register all guides with the park by submitting a completed Staff Registration Form for all employees guiding within the park. The permittee will employ a staff with the expertise to operate all services authorized under this CUA.
- B. **Guide Qualifications** – The following minimum qualifications must be met by each guide operating within Grand Canyon National Park.
- All guides must possess a valid Wilderness First Responder first aid certificate plus adult CPR. More advanced first aid such as an Emergency Medical Technician certification are also accepted and encouraged. Photocopies of current first aid and CPR certification must be submitted with the Staff Registration Form.
 - Guides must be at least 18 years of age and physically capable of hiking in the canyon environment.
 - Guides must be trained in basic safety and resource protection, Leave No Trace principles, park rules and regulations and in the requirements of the CUA conditions.
 - Guides must possess previous relevant outdoor experience and have spent the night on the trail (a minimum of two times) that they are guiding on.
- C. **Guide-to-client Ratios** – All groups will maintain a ratio of no fewer than one guide for every seven clients or two guides for every 9. Maximum group size in the inner canyon is 11 people including guides. If the permittee has staff members participating in a training capacity, those staff members will be counted in the staff/client ratio.

V. OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. **Trip Leaders/Guides** – Each group must have one person identified as the group or trip leader who will remain with the group at all times. If the party is divided into more than one group, each group will have a trip leader. The trip leader will inform the group of all park rules and regulations and has responsibility for the group.
- B. **Backcountry Trip Permits** – In addition to the CUA, the permittee must obtain a backcountry trip permit from the Backcountry office for each overnight backpacking trip planned. Backcountry Office rules and regulations for obtaining commercial backpacking permits must be followed.
- C. **Orientations** – The trip leader must provide an orientation to clients for the proposed itinerary and be capable of revising the itinerary for the group or an individual if an emergency situation occurs. The orientation must include basic hiking etiquette when passing other hikers or mules, Leave No Trace principles, park rules and regulations, safety procedures, litter, human waste and emergencies. Each participant will be supplied with a map (may be photo copied) of the trail hiked. Guides/Leaders will provide their clients with accurate information on a broad

spectrum of topics related to the Grand Canyon and national parks, including, but not limited to, geology, wilderness impacts, history, ecology, etc.

VI. Approved Parking Locations for Backpacking if Permittee holds a current Transportation CUA

- A. Hermits Rest Trailhead (Hermits Trail access)**
- B. Grandview Point (Grandview Trail access)**
- C. Moran Point (Hance Trail access)**
- D. Lipan Point (Tanner Trail access)**
- E. South Kaibab Trailhead** – commercial vehicles less than 22 feet in length may drive around the barriers and park at the trailhead. Vehicles must have commercial company name clearly marked on vehicle. Vehicles may not proceed to Yaki Point.
- F. North Kaibab Trailhead** – limited to vehicles less than 22 feet in length.

The permittee may be authorized to use the above indicated paved roads and stops which are open at the time of visit, and under the direction of the Superintendent, who may revoke or modify this authorization at any time in writing or verbally to the permittee in the interest of visitor service, convenience, and safety, or to meet administrative or management needs in the park. Parking at authorized stops is permissible to the extent space is available.

VII. ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

Permittees must abide by the Grand Canyon National Park Cultural Site Information SOP (8213-0001). Under this SOP, permittees may disclose the location and lead clients to Class I archeological sites. Permittees may visit Class II archeological sites as long as they do not promote them to their trip participants and only visit them when specifically requested to do so by a trip participant.

VIII. TRAILS AND BACKCOUNTRY USE REGULATIONS

- A. Human Waste/Waste Management** – Groups are required to abide by all park rules regarding proper disposal of human waste in order to prevent the pollution of water sources, the spread of disease, and the aesthetic degradation of backcountry areas. Improper disposal of human waste is a violation of park regulations and violators are subject to fines. The use of backcountry toilets is preferred. When this is not possible, guides will provide a shovel, paper, zip-lock bags and instructions for their clients to dig a hole six inches deep and carry out their used paper or use an approved human waste container also carried out and disposed of properly. All trash must be packed out of the corridor/backcountry and disposed of in an appropriate waste container.
- B. Cigarette Smoking** – Smoking on trails is highly discouraged. Smokers must use caution when smoking to prevent dropping ashes or embers that might ignite a wildfire. Cigarette butts are trash and must be packed out of the corridor/backcountry for proper disposal. Trip leaders/guides will ensure that cigarette butts are disposed of properly.
- C. Food** – All food scraps (fruit peels, nut shells, etc.) are considered trash and must be carried out. It is a violation to feed the wildlife, including squirrels.
- D. Personal Consumption of Wild Edibles** – Gathering of fruits, nuts, berries, edible plants, or plant parts for personal consumption is permitted. Wild edibles or other plant matter may not be gathered for transport outside the park or for commercial purposes.
- E. Rock Climbing** – Technical rock climbing is prohibited.

IX. EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES

- A. Guide Equipment** – A group size first aid kit will be carried by each group. The guide will carry a small shovel, toilet paper and plastic baggies for appropriate disposal of human waste. Guides will also be prepared for

emergency situations where they may need to revise their original trip plan to accommodate clients who may be struggling to complete their intended hike. Some recommended additional items include flashlight, compass and emergency overnight equipment.

- B. Client Equipment** – The trip leader/guide will ensure that each member of the group has adequate food and water for the proposed itinerary, appropriate footwear, clothing, light sources and sun-block. Clients will also be prepared for emergency situations where the original trip plan may need to be revised due to unforeseen emergency situations. Some recommended additional items include flashlight, compass and emergency overnight equipment.

X. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

An accident resulting in personal injury, death or property damage shall be reported to the Superintendent, as soon as possible. [36 CFR 2.33, 3.4, 4.4] All motor vehicle accidents resulting in injury, personal/government property damage, or injury to park wildlife or resources must be report to park law enforcement immediately at 928-638-7805 or by dialing 911. Commercial operators must remain on scene until the arrival of law enforcement officers.

All commercial operators are responsible for providing their clients with the necessary information to locate or contact their group if they become delayed or separated. Commercial operators may not abandon their clients in the park and are solely responsible for making arrangements for their clients to rejoin their group after being separated. Lost or missing clients must be reported to park dispatch as soon as possible and without unnecessary delay, at 928-638-7805. While self-rescue is encouraged in cases where no additional resources are needed, the National Park Service retains the authority to make the determination to employ additional resources when the situation warrants.

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The trip leader/guide will promptly report information about any human illness, whether employees or guests, to the Public Health Consultant at 928-638-7355. This information, along with other information received, will be evaluated by the Public Health Consultant to help identify outbreaks of illness associated with contaminated water or food sources or caused by other adverse environmental conditions.

XI. GENERAL

- A. The National Park Service reserves the right to establish commercial user night limitations for the time periods and/or Use Areas as future conditions may warrant. This need shall be evaluated as part of the Backcountry Management Plan public review process. Backcountry commercial use (Corridor and non-Corridor), including North Rim winter use, will not be limited at this time except as follows:
 - 1. An exception to the restrictions on overnight Corridor use may be made for commercially guided special populations (physically or otherwise handicapped). Commercial use for Corridor hikes for these organizations may be granted by the Superintendent on a need basis, after careful review of each request individually on its own merits.
 - 2. Commercial Use Authorizations will not be issued for authorized activities granted to existing Concessionaires under the terms of current Concession contracts.

Commercial operators must compete for Backcountry Use Permits on the same basis as noncommercial groups and parties. No other special consideration or exceptions to reservation policies, campground and/or Use Area limits, etc., will be granted. All commercial operators may have equal access to the backcountry reservation system in order to book verifiable client reservations. Verifiable clients are trip participants whom the commercial operator can identify by name, telephone number, and address and who have contacted the company and requested services for specific dates and locations.

Application for Commercial Backpacking CUA

To apply for a commercial backpacking CUA, complete the [CUA Application Form](#) and mail with supporting documents, (Certificate of Insurance, staff registration form with copies of guides WFR and CPR certifications), and permit fee to: Grand Canyon National Park, Attn: Concessions Office, PO Box 129 (1 Village Loop Road), Grand Canyon, AZ 86023.. Telephone inquiries should be directed to the Concessions Office at 928-638-7707 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Mountain Standard Time, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Processing can take **four or more weeks** depending on the time of year so please plan accordingly.

The CUA Application Form can be found on the park's website: <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/cua.htm>

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