Rocky Mountain

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
Rocky Mountain National Park

Health and Safety for Professional Bus Tours

Most paved roads in beautiful Rocky Mountain National Park are accessible by commercial tour buses. High elevations, narrow, winding roads, and heavy summer traffic can add challenges.

Important Numbers

Emergencies	**911 or 970-586-1203**
Park Information	970-586-1206
Trail Ridge Road Status	970-1222 (recorded message)

Bus Idling

Breathing in diesel fumes at high altitudes compromises one's ability to obtain sufficient oxygen and invites medical problems for tour members and other park visitors. You can minimize these problems:

- ALWAYS turn OFF your bus engine. Letting the motor run, even for a few minutes, has the potential to create medical problems for your passengers and others nearby.
- Do not drop off or pick up tour members in front of either Trail Ridge Store or Alpine Visitor Center on Trail Ridge Road, or in front of Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. Diesel fumes can build up at the entrances to these buildings and create difficult breathing conditions for those entering and near the bus. Also, it impedes access for other visitors to these facilities. Instead, drop off and pick up passengers only in designated bus parking areas.
- If you have a disabled passenger, park the bus in the designated bus parking area at a visitor center. The driver/guide may borrow a wheelchair from a visitor center ranger.

High Elevation

Trail Ridge Road climbs from 8,000 feet to 12,183 feet, causing many people to experience health problems.

Frequently, these problems become medical emergencies. When this happens, a passenger may be separated from the tour while receiving medical attention, or the tour may be greatly delayed.

Minimize Physical Impacts

Be proactive: minimize the physical effects of altitude and diesel fumes.

Professional Tour Operators:

- Before ascending park roads, advise passengers what they can do to best cope with the thin air of high altitude.
- Equally important is to ensure that the air passengers breathe is as pure as possible.
- The only cure for altitude sickness is to go down to a lower elevation.
- Have a first aid kit and cell phone on board your bus. Do not rely on cell phones in Rocky Mountain National Park, as many locations in this rugged park have no service.

Tour Leader:

- Limit high elevation stops to less than 30 minutes. The longer passengers are kept at high altitudes, the greater likelihood they will develop health problems.
- Make passengers aware of the signs and symptoms of altitude sickness, such as headache, dizziness or lightheadedness, nausea, sleepiness or fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, or trouble sleeping. Keep in mind that if a passenger develops serious medical complications at higher elevations, the passenger may have to be evacuated and separated from the rest of the tour.
- It is prudent for bus drivers and tour guides to have an action plan in the event of its occurrence. Know First Aid and CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation).

Tour Members:

- The air is very dry here, so adequate hydration is important to prevent altitude sickness. Drink two to three times more decaffeinated, non-alcoholic fluids than usual.
- Keep eating. Snacks throughout the day can help prevent alititude sickness.
- Preexisting medical conditions can be aggravated by high altitude; take your usual medications.
- Go easy; don't over-exert at high altitudes.

Entrance Fees

A fee will be assessed for commercial tour vehicles based on vehicle capacity.
This means the total seating capacity, not the actual number of people on board.
Annual passes *may not* be used for commercial tours.

Passenger Capacity	Fee
1-6	$25
7-15	$75
16-25	$100
26 & over	$200

Payment must be by U.S. currency, coin, check (payable to National Park Service), or American Express, Visa, Master Card or Discover credit cards.

With the receipt, unlimited reentry is allowed for the same group of people only, for seven consecutive days including date of purchase.

Companies that make frequent trips to the park must purchase a new pass for each new tour group.

Park Roads and Parking Areas

Roads For Tour Buses To Avoid:

East Side

Endovalley Road past the Alluvial Fan parking areas and Old Fall River Road
Longs Peak Trailhead and Campground
Moraine Park Campground and Fern Lake Trailhead
Upper Beaver Meadows Road
Wild Basin Road
McGraw Ranch Road

West Side

Coyote Valley Trailhead
Lake Irene Picnic Area
North Inlet Trailhead

Tour Buses at Bear Lake

There is no parking for tour buses at Bear Lake. Bus drivers please:

- Drop off passengers at Bear Lake as directed by park staff
- Drive bus to Park & Ride
- In summer, a Bear Lake ranger can contact a Park & Ride ranger to advise the bus driver when the group is ready for pickup or a bus driver can set a prearranged time for passenger pickup.

Bus Guides

On a limited basis, park rangers may be available to serve as step-on guides for buses driving through the park. To reserve a ranger-guide, call 970-586-3777.
The Rocky Mountain Nature Association offers step-on guides for a fee. See rmna.org or call 970-586-3262.

Park Regulations

Tundra Protection

The park has established Tundra Protection Areas surrounding the Alpine Visitor Center, and at Forest Canyon, Rock Cut, and Gore Range Overlooks. In these areas visitors must stay on trails and are not allowed to walk on the tundra. Tundra is a very fragile environment, where an inch-high plant could be several years old! Help rangers protect this special place.

Natural Features

Take only pictures. Regulations prohibit taking any natural features including antlers, pinecones and rocks; taking artifacts; using metal detectors; or disturbing soil, rocks, or vegetation in the park.

Wildlife

When viewing any wildlife, please:

- Obey wildlife closure areas and “no stopping” traffic zones.
- Use parking areas along the road. If not available, pull your vehicle completely off the road and don’t park on vegetation.
- Approaching animals may cause them stress, leading to disease or illness. If you cause an animal to move or change its behavior you are too close.
- Wildlife can be unpredictable. For your safety and theirs, enjoy and photograph wildlife from a distance.
- Never feed wildlife, including birds and chipmunks.