Rocky Mountain

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

Rocky Mountain National Park

Health and Safety for Professional Bus Tours

Emergency: Call 911 or 970-586-1203

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 client on your tour may be separated from your tour while receiving medical attention, or your tour may be greatly detained.

As a professional tour operator, you can minimize these problems by:

- Telling your passengers, before ascending, what they can do to best cope with the thin air of high altitude.
- Equally important is to insure that the air your passengers breathe is as pure as possible.

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

- 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 the Alpine Visitor Center on Trail Ridge Road or in front of the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center/Park Headquarters. Diesel fumes will go into these buildings and thus create difficult breathing conditions for those inside and near the bus. Instead drop off and pick up passengers only in designated bus parking spots.
- If you have a passenger that can't walk, park the bus in the designated bus parking at a visitor center and have the driver/guide request that a ranger bring a wheelchair out to assist the passenger.

What Tour Members Should Do:

- Drink plenty of water before coming to and while traveling at high altitude (at least two quarts a day). In the thin, dry air of Trail Ridge Road, we exhale twice as much moisture as at sea level.
- Minimize intake of caffeinated beverages, especially if they have a cardiac or respiratory condition.
- Avoid dieting at high elevations; rather eat plenty of foods high in sugars and carbohydrates unless directed by a doctor to do otherwise.
- Take their usual medications per normal.
- Go easy; don't exert themselves at high altitudes.

What You as Tour Leader Can Do:

- Limit your stops at high elevation to less than 30 minutes. The longer clients are kept at high altitude, the greater likelihood they will develop problems.
- Make your travelers aware of the signs and symptoms of altitude problems, such as: chest pain, headache, dizziness, nausea, sleepiness, weakness, increased flatulence, shortness of breath.
- Keep in mind that if a passenger develops serious medical complications at higher elevations, that 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 a plan in the event of its occurrence.
- Know first aid and CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation).
- Have a cell phone and first aid kit on board your bus.

Roads for Tour Buses to Avoid

East Side

- Endovalley/Old Fall River
- Longs Peak
- Moraine Park Campground/Fern Lake Trailhead
- Upper Beaver Meadows

Wild Basin

- West Side
- Coyote Valley
- Lake Irene
- North Inlet.

DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE

Please remind your passengers that feeding or approaching wildlife is illegal.

You and your clients must stay on the trail at Alpine Visitor Center and other major tundra trails. Do not walk on the tundra and do not pick flowers or take souvenirs (such as rocks, etc.). Thank you.

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Park information is available at 970-586-1206 or on-line at www.nps.gov/romo

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