

**ZION NATIONAL PARK
COMMERCIAL USE AUTHORIZATION PROGRAM**

**2026 OPERATING PLAN FOR
HIKING/WALKING – FRONTCOUNTRY:
COMMERCIALLY GUIDED INTERPRETIVE HIKING TOURS LEVEL II
(LARGE GROUPS 16-50 PEOPLE)**

1. Authorized Use Defined:

Interpretive Services: Guided Interpretive Hiking Tours (Level II) are organized groups of 16 to 50 people including group leaders traveling on an itinerary which has been packaged, priced, or sold as a guided hiking tour of authorized trails in Zion National Park (reference Permitted Areas below). Group splitting into groups of no more than 15 people per authorized trail, including guide(s), is required for larger groups. Each individual group must have a separate guide. Guides provide an educational forum through the use of interpretive methods and concepts for the preservation and protection of park resources in conjunction with the management objectives of Zion National Park. Such tours must provide natural and/or cultural resource information about the park as well as safety and resource protection messages.

As per United States Code 16-5966 (USC 16-5966)

(c) LIMITATIONS.— Any authorization issued under this section shall be limited to—

(2) the incidental use of resources of the unit by commercial operations which provide services originating and terminating outside of the boundaries of the unit. And as per NPS policy (Management Policies 2006) 10.3.3 Limitations - the incidental use of resources of the unit by commercial operations that provide services originating and terminating outside of the boundaries of the park unit.

Only services defined above may occur under this authorization.

2. Authorized Use Areas Defined:

For Level II permits: (16 to 50 People)

- Grotto Trail (from the Zion Lodge shuttle stop 6 only)
- Kayenta Trail
- Lower Emerald Pools
- Pa'rus Trail (including designated river access areas)

When entering the park under a Level II permit, groups are not permitted to split into smaller units in order to hike on Level III trails. Members of Level II groups are restricted to Level II trails, regardless of the number of people hiking.

Trails marked with an asterisk (*) may be closed for an extended amount of time. All trail closures MUST be observed.

3. Unauthorized Use Defined:

Guiding in any area of the park not authorized in section 2 is a violation of this permit. Hiking in wilderness areas or to cultural/archeological resource sites is prohibited.

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Social trails (informal, non-designated trails between two locations) are not authorized for CUA holders use.

This authorization does not allow for the use of bicycles (human powered or e-bikes) You may package, price, sell multi-adventure tours, for multi-days, or even the same day, but hiking and biking must be separate activities (i.e. riding a bike to the trailhead to lead a guided hike is prohibited). Leading guided biking under this authorization is a violation of this permit and will result in punitive actions.

Public Use Obstruction: Permitted groups are sharing visitor facilities with the general public. This permit does not convey any priority use of any park areas including park trails, road side pullouts, parking areas, picnic areas, etc. Permittees are responsible for the conduct of their clients and must advise clients to stay on trails, walk single file, and allow the public to pass. The use of tripods on trails is prohibited by permittees or clients (monopods are authorized). Tours must not interfere with the general visiting public.

Laws and Policies: A Commercial Use Authorization does not authorize permittees to facilitate any activities or actions that are prohibited in the park. For more information on park regulations visit: <http://www.nps.gov/zion/learn/management/lawsandpolicies.htm>. Permit violations can result in punitive action (fine, revocation of permit and or arrest) against both the representative (guide), and the permittee.

Shuttle Bus Embarkation: Permittee may not commence shuttle ridership within the park at the Human History Museum or Canyon Junction shuttle stops. All up-canyon shuttle ridership must commence at the Zion Visitor Center (16+ passenger vehicles authorized to travel to the Zion Lodge may embark the shuttle at the Lodge, see condition 5). Groups may disembark the down-canyon shuttle at any stop (but not to catch an up-canyon shuttle).

Shuttle Bus Onboard Interpretation

No onboard interpretation from CUA guides while onboard park shuttle buses. Answering incidental questions from CUA guides clients is permissible.

Shuttle Etiquette: Preferential treatment for CUA holders will not be permitted. The following activities are prohibited: No bus and/or trailer for your group only, instructing driver where to stop or not stop along the shuttle route, use of the public address system on the bus park shuttle to conduct an interpretation tour, and no cutting in line to be boarded first at the Visitor Center. These types of activities will put your CUA at risk of revocation.

4. Guide Requirements:

All Guides must be identifiable as employees of the permittee: This can be accomplished by nametags and/or company identifiable clothing/accessories/hats. Company vehicles must also be identifiable.

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Acknowledgement of Permit Conditions: All guides and drivers are required to submit an online acknowledgement of CUA permit conditions before leading and/or driving tours into Zion National Park. This form is available by visiting:

<https://www.nps.gov/zion/getinvolved/commercial-use-authorization.htm>

Commercial Use Form: (formerly Attachment “E” form) Guides are required to fill-out the online Commercial Use Form prior to entering the park. Any last-minute changes to itinerary or group number must be updated within 24 hours using the online form. The online form is located at <https://www.nps.gov/zion/getinvolved/commercial-use-authorization.htm>

Medical Certifications: All guides must have a valid driver's license and current medical certifications at minimum in basic first aid and CPR. These certifications must be on file with the Commercial Services Office. It is the permittees responsibility to keep this information up to date.

Guides are responsible for making sure clients have sufficient drinking water and nourishment for the duration of the planned activity and related weather conditions.

5. Speed Limits, parking, and vehicle requirements:

Speed Limits: Permittee and permittee's employees must follow all applicable traffic laws and posted speed limits throughout the park. Operating a vehicle at a speed in excess of the speed limit is prohibited and may result in revocation of CUA permit. **The Passing of motor vehicles is prohibited throughout the park.**

Parking: No Level II Commercial Use Authorization holder arriving in a 15 passenger or smaller vehicle is permitted to park at the Human History Museum or the Canyon Junction (junction of the Scenic Drive and Zion Mt. Carmel Highway). Level II CUA holders arriving in a 16+ (i.e. Motor coach) passenger vehicle may utilize the marked bus only parking at the Human History Museum, and the Oversize/RV Parking Lot at the Zion Canyon Visitor Center (park in area labeled "Tour Bus"). Parking and stopping along park roads is prohibited except at designated parking areas or pull-offs. All vehicles must be kept on established roadways, and there must be no interference with pedestrians or other traffic in the park. All vehicles must park in designated parking spaces. **Parking and stopping in shuttle bus stops is prohibited during Zion shuttle bus operating season.**

15 passenger vans and sedans:

- 15 passenger vans *without* trailer: May Park in any authorized parking space designated for a standard sized vehicle (excluding Zion Scenic Canyon Drive unless in possession of overnight lodging reservations).
- 15 passenger vans *with* trailer: May only park in the oversized vehicle parking lot adjacent to the Zion Canyon Visitor Center (37.201240, -112.985378): or in the town of Springdale.

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Parking: The following parking areas are authorized for 16+ passenger vehicles (motor coaches) only:

- Zion Lodge designated bus parking (See map)
- Human History Museum (labeled Bus parking area in lower lot only)
- Oversize/RV Parking Lot at the Zion Canyon Visitor Center (park in area labeled "Tour Bus")
- Kolob Canyon Visitor Center (labeled RV/Bus parking area only)
- Kolob Canyon Timber Creek Overlook (labeled RV/Bus parking area only)

Authorized Loading/Unloading of 16+ passenger vehicles (motor coaches) only:

The following areas are approved for loading/unloading of passengers for motor coaches:

- Loading/Unloading zone south of the Zion Lodge Lawn (see map)
- Human History Museum (labeled Bus parking area in lower lot only)
- Oversize/RV Parking Lot at the Zion Canyon Visitor Center (park in area labeled "Tour Bus")
- Kolob Canyon Visitor Center parking lot (labeled RV/Bus parking area only)
- Kolob Canyon - Timber Creek Overlook (labeled RV/Bus parking area only)

Unauthorized Loading/Unloading:

No loading/unloading of passengers or baggage may occur directly in front of the lodge hotel buildings.

Zion Lodge - Loading/unloading or waiting for passengers in the loading/unloading zone is limited to 5 minutes maximum. Drivers must remain with their vehicles at all times when at the lodge loading/unloading area. All vehicles must proceed to the authorized parking area once unloading is complete and return to the loading area at a pre-determined time. If designated bus parking is full at the Zion Lodge, buses may remain in the Lodge loading/unloading Zone. During times of full parking, drivers must move vehicles forward toward the front of the loading zone as vehicles leave so additional vehicles can enter the lane behind them. When authorized parking spaces become available, buses must exit the loading/unloading zone and utilize the authorized Lodge bus parking area.

Vehicle Requirements: Gear may be tied to top of the vehicle, carried inside of the vehicle, or transported in a trailer, but must not be attached to the sides of the vehicle.

Vehicles used while conducting interpretive service must have company identification visible on the driver's side of the vehicle. The park reserves the right to refuse entry to any previously undeclared driver or vehicle.

6. Closures and Public Use Limits:

During the park shuttle operation season (including limited holiday service) the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive is restricted to pedestrians, bicyclists, park shuttle buses, private vehicles driven by Lodge guests with lodging reservations, and 16+ capacity passenger buses with lodge activity

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reservations. Travel in Zion Canyon above the Lodge is restricted to all motor vehicles except Zion National Park shuttle buses and administrative traffic. Permittee's vehicles that do not meet the above criteria are prohibited from traveling on the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive (unless in possession of overnight lodging reservations as stated above, a valid Red Permit must be displayed and visible in windshield). For more information on the park's shuttle system visit: <https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/zion-canyon-shuttle-system.htm>.

Additional area closures: Behind administrative offices, employee housing areas, behind locked gates, near water tanks, beyond fences, on service roads, and in construction areas.

7. Accidents/Injuries/Illness:

All accidents involving property damage, injuries, and/or medical problems must be reported to the park immediately at a ranger contact station or by calling (435) 772-3322. All such information must also be relayed by the permittee to the Commercial Services Office within 24 hours via email to zion_commercialservices@nps.gov.

8. Resource Protection:

All permittees are required to communicate the following messages to clients receiving interpretive service:

- Group leaders should be aware of current local conditions, flood levels, and flash flood warnings. This information can be obtained by stopping at the Visitor Center.
- Collecting or removing from the park any natural or cultural resource, or damaging or defacing any natural or cultural resource is prohibited.
- Stay on the trail in order to protect delicate vegetation and soils.
- In developed areas, the disposal of human waste anywhere other than in designated locations or fixtures provided for that purpose is prohibited. In non-developed areas, the disposal of human waste within 100 feet of a water source, high water mark of a body of water, a campsite, or within sight of a trail is prohibited (36 CFR 2.14). The preferred option for human waste disposal is a removal system such as a "[Restop 2](#)." If a removal system is unavailable a 4- to 8-inch deep "cat hole" can be used. Toilet paper must be carried out.
- Take only pictures - leave no evidence of your visit.
- All food scraps (fruit peels, nut shells, etc.) are considered trash and must be disposed of properly. It is a violation to feed the wildlife, including squirrels.
- Smoking on trails is highly discouraged. Smokers must use caution when smoking to prevent igniting a wildfire. Cigarette butts are trash and must be packed out for proper disposal. Trip leaders/guides should check fire conditions for current restrictions.
- Vehicles must not idle their engines when parked. Vehicles that sit with engines idling create unacceptable amounts of noise and air pollution within Zion National Park.

Nighttime Activities: Due to the sensitivity of nighttime resources in Zion National Park, all requests to facilitate nighttime hiking tours must be submitted at least three weeks ahead to time

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to zion_commercialservices@nps.gov. All requests must include all proposed locations and dates/times of proposed nighttime activities.

9. Safety Precautions:

Permittees must post a safety notice and advise all participants to read this notice (and/or provide a safety talk before activities begin). Information contained in this notice must include, but not be limited to, water safety, environmental hazards (weather, floods, sun, temperature, etc.) and resource protection. Leaders should remind participants that heatstroke is a real danger in the desert. Participants should be advised to drink lots of water, eat snacks, and wear hats/sunscreen to minimize sun exposure. Safety information and weather conditions are available at park visitor centers and by visiting www.nps.gov/zion

Each guide must carry and maintain a kit for emergency medical care. The kit must be appropriate for group size and the nature of the activity and include a flashlight.

Guides are responsible for making sure clients have sufficient drinking water and nourishment for the duration of the planned activity and related weather conditions.

10. Camping:

If the permittee requires camping within the park, reservations must be made through <http://www.recreation.gov> or by calling 877-444-6777. Permittee groups are limited to Group sites in the E Loop of Watchman Campground and group sites A, B, C and D in the South Campground. Each company regardless of the number of CUA permits held is restricted to one group site per campground, per night. **Group campsite maximum capacities are strictly enforced. Arriving with a group beyond the maximum capacity for the site(s) reserved will result in the cancellation of your reservation.**

Violations of camping regulations will be considered a violation of this permit and may lead to the revocation of your company's campsite reservation and/or Commercial Use Authorization.

11. Monitoring:

The Superintendent shall have the right to monitor permittee's activity for compliance with all aspects of this permit.

12. Entrance Fees:

Each time permittees enter the park, they must identify themselves at a park entrance station or at the Kolob Visitor Center and must present a valid Commercial Use Authorization Permit (in its entirety) to park staff. This will enable park personnel to verify that you are on the approved list for commercial activities.

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Fee Schedule: (subject to change): Visit <https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/fees.htm>

\$70.00 per-vehicle (7-15-person seating capacity)

\$80.00 per-vehicle (16-25-person seating capacity)

\$190.00 per-vehicle (26+ person seating capacity)

Non-Resident surcharge may apply

No fee will be collected from an empty vehicle entering the Park for the purpose of picking up passengers.

Tunnel permit fees are required for any large vehicle driving through the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway Tunnel. Pay \$15.00 for the tunnel permit at the entrance station before proceeding to the tunnel. Beginning in mid-2026, large vehicles will be rerouted from the Zion-Mount Carmel Highway to improve safety and protect resources. The maximum vehicle size that will be allowed to drive the Zion-Mount Carmel Highway will be no more than 7' 10" (2.39m) wide, 35' 9" (10.9m) long and 11' 4" (3.45m) tall and 50,000 pounds. Visit Zion's website at <https://www.nps.gov/zion/index.htm> for more information.

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