

**ZION NATIONAL PARK
COMMERCIAL USE AUTHORIZATION PROGRAM**

**2026 OPERATING PLAN FOR
HIKING/WALKING – FRONTCOUNTRY:
COMMERICALLY GUIDED INTERPRETIVE HIKING TOURS LEVEL III
(1-15 PEOPLE)**

1. Authorized Use Defined:

Interpretive Services: Guided Interpretive Hiking Tours (Level III) are organized groups of one to 15 people 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). Level III groups consist of no more than 15 people including group leaders. 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:

The holder is hereby authorized to use the following described land or facilities in the below-named area (area must be restored to its original condition at the end of the authorization).

Trailheads/trails:

Permittee may have more than one group on any one trail at one time provided the total amount of all groups on any one trail does not exceed 15 people, including group leaders. Permittee may split their hiking group, provided that a guide must be with each split group for the remaining portion of the hike.

Level III Permit Trails: (1 - 15 People)

- West Rim Trail from Shuttle Stop 6, the Grotto to Scout Lookout Only. (may not continue on West Rim Trail past Scout Lookout)
- Angels Landing (Permit Required – max 2 separate groups of 6 people + 1 guide per group)
- Canyon Overlook Trail
- Court of the Patriarchs Overlook Trail
- Grotto Trail
- Kayenta Trail
- Lower, Middle, and Upper Emerald Pools
- Narrows but not into or above Orderville Canyon (1.5 miles north of Riverside Walk)
- Pa’rus Trail including signed river access points

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- Riverside Walk
- Sandbench Trail (November through February)
- Timber Creek Overlook Trail
- Watchman Trail
- Weeping Rock Trail
- Observation Point Trail (only from Weeping Rock Trailhead) *
- Weeping Rock Trailhead to mouth of Echo Canyon (not into Echo Canyon) *
- Hidden Canyon Trail to mouth of Hidden Canyon (only from Weeping Rock Trailhead to end of chains) *

Trails marked with an asterisk (*) may be closed for an extended amount of time. All trail closures MUST be observed. Travel to Observation Point is prohibited from the East Mesa Trail or East Rim Trail as they travel through designated wilderness areas.

Guiding on any other trails or in any other area of the park is a violation of this permit.

Hiking in wilderness areas or to cultural/archeological resource sites is prohibited. Social trails (informal, non-designated trails between two locations) are not authorized for CUA holders use.

Angels landing Permit Pilot Program

The Angels Landing permit pilot program for commercial users will be on a first-come first-served permit system for 2026. It is important to be aware of the booking window dates below to reserve available permits for your desired tour dates. Read the Angels Landing Permit Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website for more information: [Commercial Use Authorization - Zion National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/comm/learnmore/angels-landing-permit-faq.htm)

- **Important Dates:** There will be two reservation booking windows for 2026.

First Reservation Window Opens: <u>Dec. 20, 2025, 10:00am MST</u>	For Hiking Dates In: January 1, through June 30, 2026	Permits Issued: At time of confirmation
Second Reservation Window Opens: <u>June 1, 2026, 10:00am MDT</u>	For Hiking Dates In: July 1, through December 31, 2026	At time of confirmation

Each CUA holder will be required to have a commercial account in Recreation.gov to reserve permits. Commercial users with an existing Recreation.gov account may utilize their current account for 2025 (see the Angels Landing Permit Frequently Asked Questions for more information. FAQs).

Follow Step #1: create your commercial recreation.gov account; Step # 2: login to recreation.gov to reserve available permits:

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Step #1 – Link to the [Angels Landing Permit Commercial Account Information Form](#):

Creates your commercial Recreation.gov account to login and reserve available permits. If you have an existing commercial recreation.gov account, provide your account name and email address associated with your commercial account. Recreation.gov will add your existing commercial recreation.gov account access to the Zion National Park Angels Landing Permit commercial facility. You can use your commercial recreation.gov account to login and also see other locations you may be operating in now, or in the future (National Parks and Monuments, BLM, National Recreation Areas, etc.) that recreation.gov has commercial reservation systems in place and make commercial reservations with just one login.

Form: [Angels Landing Permit Commercial Account Information Form](#) (Enter required fields and submit form)

Step #2 - Log into your commercial recreation.gov account and reserve available permits.

Website to login reserve permits: <https://www.recreation.gov/permits/4251913>

Commercial users will login to their commercial recreation.gov account to reserve permits for days and dates that show available on the permit calendar. Permits will remain available until all permits are purchased. If a CUA holder purchases and then cancels a permit or reduces group size (48 hours in advance of hike date), those permits will return to the permit system until all permits are once again purchased. Permits will be issued through recreation.gov, with the CUA holder paying the \$6.00 reservation permit application fee (up to 6 permits) per reservation and \$3.00 per-person use fee.

Commercial activities to Angels Landing will be limited to **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday ONLY**.

High Season - (March through November)

Twenty-four (24) permits per day will be available on a first come, first serve basis during high season (March through November). Maximum group size is limited to 6 guests plus one guide. Two groups per CUA holder per day is permissible in high season. Each group must be accompanied by a guide and each group must be separated on the trail by a minimum of 15 minutes. Permittee may split their hiking group, provided that a guide must be with each split group for the remaining portion of the hike.

CUA holders may purchase up to 6 permits per transaction, limited to 2 permit transactions per day in High Season. No more than 12 permits can be purchased for a single day per CUA holder during the High Season. Must not reserve more than 2 permit reservation transactions per day per CUA holder in High Season. It is a violation of your permit and may result in punitive action leading to the revocation of your permit.

Low Season - (December through February)

Eight (8) permits per day will be available on a first come, first serve basis during low season (December through February). Maximum group size is limited to 6 guests plus one guide and is limited to one (1) group per CUA holder per day during low season. Group must be accompanied by a guide.

CUA holders may purchase up to 6 permits per transaction, limited to 1 permit transaction per day in Low Season. No more than 6 permits can be purchased for a single day per CUA holder during the Low

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Season. Must not reserve more than 1 permit reservation transaction per day per CUA holder in Low Season. It is a violation of your permit and may result in punitive action leading to the revocation of your permit.

A CUA holder may guide individuals or groups (up to 6 people) that have obtained public lottery permits for Angels Landing **and have independently approached a guiding service**. Guides or CUA holders may not enter the public lottery on behalf of commercial clients. Entering the public lottery or advising and/or soliciting clients to enter the public lottery for commercially guided services is a violation of this CUA.

This is a pilot program; it is expected that changes will be ongoing as we continue to monitor and adapt the system in the third year of this program. Conditions are subject to change during the 2025 operating year. Notice of change will be given in writing.

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 and will result in punitive actions.

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, roadside 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. Groups may disembark the down-canyon shuttle at any stop (but not to catch an up-canyon shuttle).

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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.

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

Commercial Use Form: Guides are required to fill-out the online Commercial Use Form prior to entering the park. Also required to submit when guiding Angels Landing public lottery individuals or groups (up to 6 people) *that have obtained lottery permits and independently approached a CUA holder for guiding service* (see Angels Landing FAQs for details). 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. **The passing of motor vehicles is prohibited throughout the park.**

Parking: No Level III Commercial Use Authorization holder is permitted to park at the Human History Museum or the Canyon Junction (junction of the Scenic Drive and Zion Mt. Carmel Highway). 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

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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 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.

Vehicle Requirements: Gear may be tied to the 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 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. Any addition official seasonal or emergency closures of roads, trails, or public areas must be observed by permittee.

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.

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- 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 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’s groups of 7 or more people 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**

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a group beyond the maximum capacity for the site reserved will result in the cancellation of your reservation.

Permittee's groups of 6 or less people may reserve one individual campsite at either campground per night, per company.

Group size is defined by the itinerary the group is traveling on. Splitting of groups is not permitted.

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 permittees' activity for compliance with all aspects of this permit.
- 12. Entrance Fees:**

Upon entry to the park CUA holders must identify themselves at a park entrance station or at the Kolob Visitor Center and must present a valid Commercial Use Authorization (CUA signature page and complete CUA conditions) to park staff.

CUA holders are charged the per-person entrance fee for each client onboard. Clients may present personally held America the Beautiful Passes for their entrance fee, in accordance with pass guidelines. Guides are exempt from entrance fees when facilitating a commercial activity.

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

(c) 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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