



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.

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 \$275.00 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 First Aid 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 shall register all trip leaders and guides with the Superintendent by submitting a Staff Registration Form (Exhibit A) for each employee working within the park.
- B. **Guide-to-Client Ratios** - All groups will maintain a ratio of not less than one guide for every seven clients. Maximum group size in the Grand Canyon corridor is 16, including guides. The corridor trails are the North Kaibab, South Kaibab, Bright Angel, and River Trails. All non-corridor trails are managed as wilderness areas, and are, therefore, subject to the wilderness maximum group size of 11, with two guides for nine clients.

If the Permittee has staff members participating in a training capacity, those staff members will be counted in the staff/client ratio.

- C. **Guide Standards/Qualifications** - The following minimum qualifications must be met by each guide/trip leader operating within Grand Canyon National Park:
 - 1. All trip leaders and guides must possess a valid "Wilderness First Responder" first aid certificate plus adult Heartsaver CPR. More advanced first aid or medical certification, such as Emergency Care Attendant, Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician, etc., are also accepted and encouraged. Photocopies of current first aid and CPR certification must be submitted with staff registration forms.
 - 2. Guides must be at least 18 years of age and physically fit.
 - 3. Guides must be trained in basic safety and resource protection, park rules and regulations, and in the requirements of the CUA and attachments. Previous outdoor experience, including personal familiarity with entire length of trails used (minimum of two trips) is required.

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 a 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.
- C. **Orientations** - The trip leader must provide an orientation to trip participants about basic hiking etiquette when passing other hikers or mules, park rules and regulations, safety procedures, resource protection information, litter, human waste, personal safety, and emergencies. The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that the group does not get separated. Each participant should be supplied with a map (may be 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.

This CUA does not cover services to special or challenged groups.

VI. APPROVED LOCATIONS

Under an approved permit the permittee will be authorized to use the following described lands or facilities along with applicable backcountry areas determined through the backcountry permit within Grand Canyon National Park.

The permittee may access the **Village Area** via South Entrance Road, Village Loop Road, Center Road, Market Plaza Road, Zuni Way, and Canyon View Bypass Road. The permittee may access **Desert View** by Highway 64 (Desert View Drive) and **North Rim**, Highway 67.

Loading/Unloading Areas:

The following areas are approved for loading/unloading of passengers and/or luggage as noted for no more than 15 minutes. Drivers must remain with their vehicles. All vehicles must proceed to an authorized parking area once unloading has been completed.

Bright Angel Lodge – Vehicles may load and unload passengers and/or luggage only in the four (4) spaces on the north side of the commercial parking area directly adjacent to the sidewalk in front of the lodge. Vehicles must proceed to an authorized parking area once unloading has been completed and may not remain parked at the Bright Angel Lodge except as noted under the parking areas section of this CUA.

Desert View – Vehicles may utilize the future shuttle bus stop to load or unload passengers. Vehicles must proceed to the authorized commercial parking area once unloading has been completed.

Parking Areas:

The following areas are approved commercial vehicle parking areas. Vehicles may park in any of the designated areas as long as the requirements noted below are met.

Hermit Rest Trailhead

Grandview Point (Grandview trail access)

Moran Point (Hance trail access)

Lipan Point (Tanner trail access)

South Kaibab Trailhead – commercial vehicles less than 22 feet in length may drive around the barriers and park at the trailhead. Vehicles may not proceed to Yaki Point.

North Kaibab Trailhead

Lot C – Parking is restricted to vehicles less than 22 feet in length.

Lot D - Parking is restricted to vehicles less than 22 feet in length.

Backcountry Office – designated commercial vehicle parking area located directly behind the backcountry office. The 14 parking spots in the middle of the lot are limited to vehicles over 22 feet in length. The parking spots on the outer edges of the parking lot are limited to vehicles under 22 feet in length.

Market Plaza – Vehicles may not take up more than two spaces within the parking lot and must be parked in between the white striped lines. Vehicles may not stop in the traffic lane that leads to the shuttle bus stop and Yavapai Lodge to load and unload passengers. Vehicles may not stop in the traffic lane in front of the general store, post office, or bank to load and unload passengers.

Desert View/Watchtower - designated commercial vehicle parking.

The following areas are not authorized for use, parking, loading, unloading, or stopping at any time of the year:

Bright Angel Trailhead

Any of the overlooks or viewpoints along Desert View Road, except where noted under parking, or allowable stops.

Any of the overlooks or viewpoints along Hermit Rest Road

Any of the overlooks or viewpoints on the North Rim, except where noted under loading/unloading or parking.

Shuttle Bus Stops and Services:

The use of any shuttle bus stop for loading/unloading of passengers, parking, and/or stopping is not authorized.

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. These sites have a long history of tourist use, are marked on U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps, are described in widely available guide books, are generally known to visitors, and are actively promoted as tourist destinations. 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. **Waste Management** - ALL trash must be packed out of the corridor/backcountry and disposed of in an appropriate waste container.
- B. **Human Waste Management** - Groups are required to abide by all park rules regarding proper disposal of human waste in order 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/leaders should provide a shovel, paper, and zip-lock bags, and instruct their clients to dig a hole six inches deep and to carry out their used paper.
- C. **Fires** - Open wood and ground fires are prohibited.
- D. **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.
- E. **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.
- F. **Personal Consumption of Wild Edibles** - Collection of fruits, nuts, berries, edible plants, or plant parts for personal consumption is permitted.
- G. Technical rock climbing is prohibited.

IX. EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES

- A. **Client Equipment** - Trip leader/guide will ensure that each member of the group has adequate food and water for the proposed itinerary, appropriate footwear, clothing, and sun block. Recommended items include head covering, flashlight, map, and a compass.
- B. **First Aid** - A group-size first aid kit should be carried by each group.
- C. **Leader/Guide Equipment** - In addition to the equipment listed above, the trip leader/guide will carry a small shovel, toilet paper, and plastic baggies.

X. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

All accidents/incidents resulting in personal injury requiring more than first aid treatment, property damage estimated to be in excess of \$100.00, or damage to park resources will be reported to park dispatch at 928-638-7805 as soon as reasonable, but no more than 24 hours following the incident.

Lost or runaway 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.

Permittee shall assume full rescue expenses incurred by any member of their organized trip.

The trip leader/guide will promptly report information about any human illness, whether employees or guests, to the Public Health Consultant at 928-226-0168. 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.

Application for Commercial Backpacking CUA

To apply for a commercial backpacking CUA, complete the application and mail with supporting documents, (Certificate of Insurance, staff registration form with copies of guides first aid certification), 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.