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## **IAATO Guidelines for Short Overnight Stays**



# IAATO Guidelines for Short Overnight Stays

## Information Paper submitted by IAATO

### **Introduction**

Following the discussions at ATCM XXXV around WP037 *Coastal Camping Considerations* submitted by the United States and Norway, IAATO's Field Operations Committee undertook a review of IAATO's guidelines for short overnight stays, taking into account the issues raised in ATCM XXXV WP037 and the subsequent discussions at ATCM and at IAATO's 24th Meeting, (22-24 April, 2013). During those discussions, IAATO agreed to share its guidelines for short overnight stays. These are attached here as an appendix.

### **Short Overnight Stays**

IAATO views 'camping' activities as falling into three separate categories of activities:

- Deep-field camping, which can be for one night, multiple nights or even a whole season;
- Coastal multi-night camping, usually small expedition groups normally vessel-based; and
- Short overnight stays, usually from vessels, involving only a few hours ashore to experience the peace and wilderness aspects of sleeping out in Antarctica and in larger groups.

### **Review of Guidelines**

The issues raised in ATCM XXXV WP037 and subsequent discussion primarily focused on what IAATO defines as short overnight stay camping

During the intersessional period, IAATO Operators and Field Operations Committee reviewed the previous IAATO guidelines for short over night stays and made a number of amendments following consideration of the issues discussed at ATCM XXXVI. The amended guidelines for short overnight stays are attached.

In addition, IAATO's Field Operations Committee in conjunction with the Yacht Committee formulated guidelines for multi-night coastal camping. These were also adopted at IAATO24 and will be tested this coming season. These additional guidelines will be included in IAATO's Field Operations Manual and are available to Treaty Parties on request.

### **Sites Used and Passenger to Guide Ratio**

A review of the sites used for short overnight stays during the 2012-13 season are listed below. In total, 16 sites saw a total of 61 short overnight stays during this past season. The largest number ashore at any time was 62 tourists, accommodated primarily in bivouac bags, at Neko Harbour on 28th November, 2012. The highest passenger-to-guide ratio was 15 passengers to one guide; More frequently the ratio was less than 10 passengers to one guide, and the average overall was approximately 9:1

*Table 1: 2012/13 Short overnight stay sites and related statistics*

Site	Total No. Tourists	Total No. Visits	Average Passenger: Guide Ratio
Almirante Brown	37	2	9:1
Argentine Islands Other	40	1	13:1
Booth Island	51	1	13:1
Damoy Point/Dorian Bay	441	12	10:1
Danco Island	84	3	6:1
Horseshoe Island	14	1	7:1
Hovgaard Island	79	3	7:1
Jougla Point	32	1	8:1
Leith Cove	616	17	9:1
Neko Harbour	151	3	12:1
Orne Islands	18	1	9:1
Paradise Bay	24	1	6:1
Peltier Channel	31	1	6:1
Petermann Island	38	3	6:1
Ronge Island Other	560	10	10:1
Vernadsky Station	30	1	7:1

**Conclusion**

ATCM XXXVI is invited to take note of this information and the appended Guidelines for Short Overnight Stays.

**Appendix:****IAATO Guidelines for Short Overnight Stays in Antarctica**

**(Note: These guidelines only apply to passenger vessels offering a near shore camping experience to a maximum of ten hours.)**

Prior to offering the activity, please ensure that short overnight stays are included in your operator's permit conditions (Advance Notification and EIA).

**1. Site Selection**

- Sites should be located away from vegetated sites and a reasonable distance (150m) from wildlife concentrations, avoiding any sites of historical interest or scientific stations.
- Where tents are used, these should only be pitched on snow, ice or bare, smooth rock, away from lakes, to avoid any potential contamination of water.
- Tents and bivouac bags should not be placed on wildlife access routes between colonies or between marine mammal haul outs and the sea.
- If using a site with ATCM Site Guidelines, ensure that visits between certain hours (e.g. 22:00 and 04:00) are allowed.
- Make sure the numbers going ashore are within the limits in the guidelines.

**2. Clothing and Equipment**

- Prior to the season camping gear should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. During the season it should only be used in Antarctica for camping on snow, ice or bare rock.
- After each use ashore, all camping equipment, most particularly tent and bivouac bases and mats, must be cleaned again with disinfectant.
- As conditions can change rapidly, make sure campers have clothing and equipment suitable for the worst weather.

**3. Briefing**

- Before camping, (preferably onboard and repeated onshore), guests should be thoroughly briefed. This briefing should include the following:
  - No food or drink is to be taken to shore other than emergency rations.
  - A safe area for operations should be delineated (preferably with the use of flags).
  - Campers must know the location of staff tents.
  - Campers must be warned that it may be necessary to return to the ship at any time, especially if there is a change in weather or ice conditions.
  - Campers should be warned that alcohol use could increase the likelihood of hypothermia.

**4. Onshore**

- Campers should not take stoves, fuel or food ashore – with the exception of emergency rations and survival gear, drinking water and medical supplies.
- The group should only be taken ashore after dinner, and return to the ship for breakfast.
- While campers should be encouraged to use toilet facilities onboard prior to leaving the ship, portable toilet facilities should be available ashore. All human waste should be returned to the ship.
- There should be sufficient portable toilets for the number of visitors ashore.
- The option of a 'noise curfew' is recommended to allow campers to 'hear' the Antarctic.
- While campers are ashore, staff must be in full radio contact with the ship.
- The minimum staff to passenger ratio of 1:20 must be maintained.

- Adequate supervision should be maintained at all times (for example, ensure the campsite is visible from the ship, institute a watch system amongst field staff or have a buddy system between campers).
- Staff tents should be clearly identified and part of the group, and guests should know they could wake up a staff member at any time, if necessary.
- Zodiacs and drivers should be on standby at the ship at all times.

**5. *On Departure***

- Everything that is carried ashore should be returned to the ship.
- Field staff should ensure sites are left clean after each night's camp.
- Consideration should be given to ensure participants, especially staff members, are sufficiently rested to assume normal duties after the overnight stay.
- All evidence of the visit must be cleared; including the filling of any snow holes and the flattening of any snow sculptures.