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IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM)

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An Information Paper Submitted by the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO)

Summary

The IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM) is a core document for all IAATO Operators to enable the practical application of IAATO's mission of safe and environmentally responsible tourism to Antarctica. Updated and circulated annually to IAATO Operators, the FOM provides all relevant international governance, including ATCM instruments, as well as IAATO requirements, guidelines, standard operating procedures and other industry best practice. Recognizing the benefits of having information related to tourism activities collated in one place for Competent Authorities, IAATO will continue to provide any of the Competent Authorities and the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat with the annually updated FOM if requested to do so.

Background

To fulfil the practical implementation of IAATO's mission of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to Antarctica, one of the most important roles for IAATO is to ensure all of the latest, relevant information is easily available to Operators ranging from international requirements, guidelines, standard operating procedures, and industry best practice. The core method for delivering this information is the IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM) first created in 2008-09 (see ATCM XXXII IP087 *IAATO Field Operations Manual*). Before the FOM, IAATO Operators created custom in-house manuals incorporating Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) and IAATO guidelines and procedures, as well as their own standard operating procedures. These custom manuals, now integrated with the FOM, are a core part of Operator procedures. Since its inception, the FOM has been updated continuously to incorporate new standard operating procedures, guidelines, report forms, and applicable decisions by IAATO, ATCM, SCAR, COMNAP, CCAMLR and other relevant bodies, such as International Maritime Organization, International Hydrographic Organization, etc.

How the FOM works:

Due to the dynamic nature of field operations and the level of detail required, the IAATO FOM is a fully electronic manual. Prior to each Antarctic operating cycle, the FOM is overhauled, updated and made available online to IAATO Operators. In addition to updating Operators on requirements, guidelines, report forms and standard operating procedures, the FOM also serves as the curriculum for the annual mandatory, operationally specific, IAATO Online Assessment. Utilizing the same Sync App ATCM does for annual meeting papers, during the season IAATO loads updates to the FOM server, where users can then sync their documents to ensure they have the most up to date information.

The FOM is essential in ensuring that all Operators, and those representing them in the field (e.g Captains, Senior Officers, Field Staff, etc), know what is required of them and have easy access to critical information, despite being resource intensive to maintain. The FOM also serves as a guide to a plethora of additional resources. For an overview of 2024-25 Season information contained in the IAATO FOM, please see the Table of Contents (site map) listed in Appendix 1.

In 2016, IAATO launched a slimmed-down version of the publicly accessible FOM and ATS information through an application called *IAATO Polar Guide: Antarctica*. It is publicly available for

download for Android and iOS (see ATCM XLII IP 98 *Education and Outreach by IAATO – an update for 2019*).

Technology and the needs of the organization have advanced since the 2016 creation of the IAATO Polar Guide App, and currently IAATO is in the process for further developing the App to meet a broader set of goals that are part of IAATO's Five-Year Strategic Plan.

IAATO has made the FOM available to Competent Authorities annually since its inception. Recognizing the benefits of having information related to tourism activities collated in one place for Competent Authorities, IAATO will continue to provide Competent Authorities and the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat with the annually updated FOM, if requested to do so.

Appendix 1: FOM Table of Contents

Appendix 1:**IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM)****Table of Contents**

(Please Note: Given that there are 709 documents in the FOM, the below is principally the high level Table of Contents, with some sections expanded to demonstrate some documents which might be of particular interest to Parties.

Section 1: General Information**Section 2: Seasonal Information**

- IAATO Operational Instructions
- IAATO Biosecurity Instructions
- ATCM Resolution 6 (2022) Post Visit Report Forms (Vessel and Deep-Field)

Section 3: Emergency and Medical Information

- ATCM Resolution 4 (2004) Guidelines on Contingency Planning, Insurance and Other Matters
- IAATO Emergency Contingency Planning
- IAATO Emergency and Medical Response Plan (EMER)

Section 4: Reporting and Checklists

- **Checklist**

- IAATO Observation Forms
- ATCM Resolution 5 (1995) Inspection Checklist

- **Reports**

- IAATO Incident Report Forms
 - CCAMLR Debris
 - Bird Strikes
 - General Incidents
 - Whale Collision

Section 5: Antarctic Treaty System

- The Antarctic Treaty
- Environment Protocol
- Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
- Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
- Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Seals

Section 6: Briefings (Online Availability Only due to File Size)**Section 7: Operational Procedures**

- **Activity Operational Procedures**

- IAATO Statement on the Use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)
- IAATO RPAS for Navigation Use
- ATCM Resolution 4 (2018) Environmental Guidelines for Operation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in Antarctica
- IAATO Operational Procedures for Short Overnight Stays

- IAATO Operational Procedures Multi night coastal camping
 - IAATO Operational Procedures for Submersibles (HOV)
 - IAATO Operational Procedures for Underwater activities
 - IAATO Procedures upon the Discovery of a High or Unusual Mortality Event
 - IAATO Requesting Information on Encounters with Non-IAATO Visitors at Landing Sites
 - IAATO Operational Procedures for Selected Vessel Operations in the Vicinity of Ice
 - IAATO Advice on Shore Stranding Equipment for Vessel Operations
 - IAATO Assessing New Activities Checklist
 - IAATO Assessment of Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures
 - IAATO Operational Procedures for Organizing Marathons
 - IAATO Operational Procedures for Sea Kayaking
 - IAATO Recommendation Note for Operations on Coastal Crevasse Terrain
- **Area/Site Specific Guidelines**
 - Full Set of ATCM ASMA and ASPA Management Plans
 - Full List of ATCM HSMs
 - General Useful Information
 - Peninsula ATCM and IAATO Visitor Site Guidelines
 - Peninsula Maps
 - Research Station Guidelines
 - Ross Sea Guidelines
- **Biosecurity Operational Procedures**
 - IAATO Response to Avian Influenza – Information for Visitors
 - IAATO Operational Procedures for Discovery of a High Mortality Event
 - IAATO Don't Pack a Pest
 - IAATO Boot, Clothing and Equipment Decontamination Procedures for Marine Operations
 - COMNAP Non-Native Species Checklist
 - ATCM CEP Non-Native Species Manual
- **Overarching ATCM and IAATO Operational Procedures**
 - ATCM Recommendation XVIII-1 (1994) Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic and Guidance for Those Organizing and Conducting Tourism and Non-governmental Activities in the Antarctic
 - ATCM Resolution 4 (2021) General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic
- **Wildlife Operational Procedures**
 - General Wildlife Watching
 - Whale
 - Emperor Penguin
 - Seal
 - General
 - Fur
 - Leopard

- Elephant
- Birds

Section 8: Vessel Operations

- IAATO Geofenced Whale Areas
- IAATO General Vessel Booking Procedures
- IAATO Live Ship Scheduler Guide
- IAATO Vessel Code of Conduct
- IMO Polar Code Text
- IAATO Acoustic Awareness Zone – The Gullet, Adelaide Island
- IAATO Anchorage Etiquette for King George Island
- IAATO Statement on Waste Management
- IAATO Vessel Helicopter Guidelines and Etiquette
- IAATO Wilderness Etiquette
- IAATO Etiquette Between Ships and Yachts
- ATCM Measure 15 (2009) Landing of Persons from Passenger Vessels in the Antarctic Treaty Area
- ATCM Resolution 4 (2023) Urgent Measures to be Taken with Respect to Certain Tourism and Non-Governmental Activities
- Details on ATCM Protected Areas (ASPAs, ASMAs and HSMs)
- ATCM Resolution 3 (2006) Ballast Water Exchange in the Antarctic Treaty Area (practical guidelines)

Section 9: Yacht Operation

- ATCM Resolution 10 (2012) Yachting Guidelines, including Yachting Checklist
- IAATO Offline Ship Scheduler Instructions
- IAATO Yacht Outreach Poster
- Details on ATCM Protected Areas (ASPAs, ASMAs and HSMs)

Section 10: Aircraft Operations

***The COMNAP e-AFIM is distributed by each Operator's NCA, after they are permitted/authorized.**

- ATCM Resolution 2 (2004) Guidelines for the Operation of Aircraft Near Concentrations of Birds in Antarctica
- ATCM Resolution 1 (2013) Air Safety in Antarctica
- ATCM Resolution 4 (2023) Urgent Measures to be Taken with Respect to Certain Tourism and Non-Governmental Activities
- IAATO Vessel Helicopter Protocols
- IAATO Helicopter Restricted Activity Zones

Section 11: Deep Field Operations

- ATCM ASMA 5 South Pole
- IAATO Deep Field and Air Operations Biosecurity Procedures

Section 12: Cruise Only Operations

Section 13: Ross Sea

Section 14: Supporting Science

- Citizen Science

- **Voluntary Cetaceans and Pinniped Sightings (V-CaPS)**
- **Site Stewardship**

Section 15: Antarctic Ambassador

- IAATO Antarctic Ambassador Expedition Pack

Section 16: Field Staff Resources

- IAATO General Guidance on the Use of Social Media

Section 17: Operator Pre-Departure Information

- IAATO Reducing Waste – Guidelines for Visitors to Antarctica

- **Operational Protocols Posters**

Section 18: Climate Change

- ATCM Helsinki Declaration on Climate Change and the Antarctic
- IAATO Climate Change Strategy

Checklist of Additional Information that Operators need to provide vessels (not included in IAATO Field Operations Manual):

- Company/Operators Advance Notification & Environmental Impact Assessment (company specific document).
- Copy of all relevant permits/authorizations (e.g. national permit, waste management permit (if applicable), historic hut permit, sub-Antarctic permit where appropriate).
- Individual Company: Internal Standard Operating Procedures for all activities.
- Relevant Domestic Legislation.
- Any relevant signed contract or company specific procedure which complements the IAATO Emergency and Medical Response Plan (EMER).