



July 1, 2021

IAATO Releases COVID-19 Recommendations as Operators Prepare for Antarctic Season

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) has released a series of COVID-related recommendations to support its members with preparations for the next Antarctic season 2021-22. The recommendations, which were released to members on June 24, have been issued as part of IAATO's mission to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic.

IAATO members have diverse and unique operations. Each operator will assess the limitations on international travel to Antarctic gateways, necessary amendments to their normal health and safety protocols, and the potential impact on their own operations, team members, and guests travelling to embarkation points and gateway communities.

After 15 months of collaboration, both within and outside of the Association, IAATO has made the following recommendations to its members with the overarching goal of minimizing the risk that COVID-19 presents:

- Passengers are fully vaccinated before embarking from their gateway departure point;
- Crew members and staff are fully vaccinated before embarkation;
- In some circumstances, if vaccination is not feasible or applicable, individuals have appropriate documentation regarding recovery from COVID-19 or are quarantined following most recent medical advice and/or relevant national requirements;
- In addition to the steps listed above, operators adopt an effective testing scheme to detect the presence of COVID-19 and take the necessary steps to reduce potential spread.

In a recent poll of IAATO Operators, members demonstrated overwhelming support of these recommendations.

IAATO emphasizes that any operations in the 2021-22 season should include strict COVID-19 management protocols during each expedition to the Antarctic. These should include specific prevention and mitigation measures implemented by Antarctic gateway authorities and should be done under the guidance of operators' respective Competent Authority.

IAATO and the Antarctic gateway authorities are continuing the dialogue regarding possibilities for operations for the upcoming season. Information and updates are regularly shared with our members.



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COVID-19 is a global event that has affected many and IAATO's thoughts are with those who have felt the impact of the pandemic on a personal level. This is a dynamic situation and the next steps taken as IAATO works towards a post-pandemic world are incredibly important. IAATO's priority first and foremost is the protection of crew, staff, visitors, gateway communities and of course, the place that brings us together: Antarctica.

Ends -

Issued by the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators

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Notes for Editors:

- Stock images are available.
 - In addition to its own bylaws and requirements for membership, IAATO requires its members to abide by the Antarctic Treaty System and other international regulations.

About IAATO

IAATO is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic. IAATO members work together to develop, adopt and implement operational standards that mitigate potential environmental impacts. These standards have proved to be successful and include, but are not limited to;

- Antarctic site-specific guidelines and site selection criteria;
- passenger to staff ratios and limiting numbers of passengers ashore;
- boot washing guidelines and the prevention of the transmission of non-native organisms;
- wilderness etiquette; ship scheduling and vessel communication procedures;
- emergency medical evacuation procedures and emergency contingency plans; reporting procedures;
- marine wildlife watching guidelines; station visitation policies.

IAATO has been carefully monitoring, analysing and reporting Antarctic tourism trends since 1991 as part of its commitment to the effective self-management of guest activities. Every year at IAATO's annual meeting, members have open and candid discussions on safety,



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environmental protection and self-regulation. Decision-making is supported by recommendations developed by IAATO's many dedicated committees and working groups throughout the year. The meetings conclude annually with the voting in of new policies on best practice which support the association's mission.