

IAATO Advice Note on Coastal Crevassed Terrain 2018

Crevasses are hazards that can cause serious injury, or death. They are found in glaciers when they change speed or direction and are dangerous when hidden by snow cover. No matter how innocuous a snowfield may appear, there may be crevasses of varying size present in all landing areas with glaciers covered by snow.

- **Walking on snow-covered glaciers should be avoided unless an experienced glacier guide finds a safe route.** The crevasses may be covered by a thin fragile snow bridge which might look safe but will not take the weight of a person.
- **Visual clues** to a crevasse's presence are unreliable, and you cannot rely on these if the terrain is covered by fresh snow or in poor light or visibility. Even if an area appears safe, and has footprints from other recent visitors, it may still be highly dangerous. The snow covering hidden crevasses can weaken in a very short period of time (e.g. in the time a person, or group, ascends to/from a viewpoint).
- **Crevasse accidents (including one death – from a non-IAATO vessel)** in the last ten years show that allowing clients to follow a flagged 'safe' route within a heavily crevassed area may not be an acceptable risk. Visitors can, and will, wander off the path. A hidden crevasse may be only a footstep off a flagged route.
- **Never be tempted** to think that an area is 'safe' even early in the season when many people assume crevasses are well bridged.
- Commonly used landing sites that have known crevassed sections include:

Cuerville – all permanent snow covered areas, particularly the snow peak and ice cliffs on the southern half of the island.

Damoy – at the top of the hill leading up from the hut, close to the outlook over Port Lockroy.

Neko Harbour – all higher ground to the east of a line drawn between the upper part of the rookery and the exposed rocky knoll look out point near the glacier.

Portal Point – going onto the neck and any area beyond.

Current position reported:
S 64°30.017' W 061°46.258'

Danco – permanent snow covered slopes to the south of the penguin colonies.

Orne Harbour – along the SW side of the ridge.

Current position reported:
S 64°37.900' W 062°33.409'

Port Charcot – along the higher slopes.

There may be crevasses of varying depth, size and extension present in all landing areas with permanent snow cover.

Prior to landing visitors at any landing site with snow slopes, **experienced individuals** should assess the area and put necessary precautions in place to minimize the risk of a crevasse incident.

- Review records and incident reports from previous seasons
- Send an advance party, roped, to probe a safe route
- Station staff at key route change points i.e. corners in the flagged route

Only **experienced individuals or groups** should approach unsurveyed areas and should be roped up using the correct equipment.

A guide team experienced in crevasse rescue should remain in the area with a crevasse rescue kit until all visitors have left the area.

IF IN DOUBT STAY AWAY!

If you do come across a previously unreported crevassed area then please inform IAATO (shipscheduler@iaato.org) at your earliest possible opportunity.