IAATO Observer Checklist

**for Air and Deep Field Operations**

Thank you for agreeing to participate as an IAATO Observer. The checklist has been designed as a useful tool to facilitate confirmation of whether obligations set forth by IAATO and the Antarctic Treaty System are being met. Please refer to the “Observer Handbook” for additional guidance for completing this checklist.

Observation Timeline:

* Assignment of vessel and Observer
* Set up voyage where observation will be done
* Vessel / company should send all pre-trip documents to the observer as if they were a joining as a passenger
* Conduct the Observation with the crew and vessel. Plan for the observation to be done over the course of the voyage
* Plan to review your draft report with the operator prior to departure
* Complete the form within 3 weeks of the observation, if you do have questions after the review, feel free to follow up with the operator
* Send or email the completed form to both IAATO and the observed company. This gives the company an opportunity to review the document and respond.

**Please submit by email to**: [**jhaase@iaato.org**](mailto:jhaase@iaato.org), cc’ing**:** [**akean@iaato.org**](http://akean@iaato.org)

**Voyage/Flight/Expedition Dates embarkation and disembarkation):**

**Observers Name:**

**Date of Report:**

**Name of aircraft/Expedition:**

**Name of Tour Operator/Organizer:**

**Voyage/flight sub-chartered to (if applicable):**

**Name of Expedition Leader:**

**Actual Itinerary/Expedition Travelled:** Please attach the Post Visit Site Report that was completed within two weeks of the conclusion of the expedition.

# **Voyage Preparation and Documentation**

## Please select which documents you were provided as “Passenger” pre-trip material prior to your observation:

* General Guidelines for Visitors ATCM XLVI (2024) Resolution 2 General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic *or* Visitor Guidelines (1994 - Recommendation XVIII-1) (FOM Section 07 - Overarching Guidelines)
* IAATO Don’t Pack a Pest (FOM Section 07 - Biosecurity Guidelines)
* Reducing Visitor Waste Guidelines (FOM Section 19)
* Expedition Cruising to Antarctica (FOM Section 19)
* Medical form (FOM Section 03 – ‘IAATO Sample Medical Questionnaire’)
* Clothing/equipment list

## Please list and explain any other documentation you were provided prior to the trip

## Was the home office efficient to work with and forthcoming with documentation? Were you provided with the same preparatory materials as all the clients? Did they arrive in a timely fashion so you could adequately prepare for your expedition?

## How did the above pre-departure material explain that conditions could be severe, inhospitable and point out the necessity for suitable clothing?

## Were clients advised that sophisticated medical care is unavailable in the Antarctic, and take out medical and evacuation insurance prior to their trip? Were they required to provide a medical questionnaire, or have to undergo any other medical assessment prior to their expedition?

# **Antarctic Treaty and Domestic Legislation** [(https://www.ats.aq/e/tourism.html)](https://www.ats.aq/e/tourism.html)

## **Compliance with Domestic Legislation**

### Please Select which permit / authorization documents the Operator has for the season / departure:

* Advance Notification
* Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), usually either at the Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE) or PEE (Preliminary Environmental Evaluation) level
* Permit(s) to enter Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPAs), if appropriate
* Waste Management Permit, if appropriate
* Other, if appropriate. Please explain below.

### Please list the country and government department for each permit or authorization granted.

## **Compliance with Operator’s Advance Notification and EIA**

(FOM Section 07 – Area & Site Specific Guidelines –General Useful Information – ‘ATCM Rec XVIII-1 Organizer Guidelines’)

### Were electronic copies of the Advance Notification and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA or IEE), or relevant paperwork (e.g., Oil Spill procedures, Waste Permits) kept in the field in an easily accessible location? Please give details.

### What was the level of familiarity amongst relevant operations staff with the content of the EIA/IEE? Please indicate who was responsible for which sections (e.g., environmental aspects of camp’s operation, education component for guests, reporting, etc.).

### Did you note any deviations/discrepancies to the operator’s EIA/IEE? If so, please describe.

## Compliance with Management Plans

### Did the operator observe all relevant management plans for Antarctic Specially Managed Areas (ASMA’s) and Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPA’s), and were these available to relevant crew, operations manager and field guides?

### Were any ASPA’s entered? If so, did the operator have the required permit(s)?

### Were any ASMA’s or historic sites visited? If so, were relevant management plans observed?

### Could the Operator, expedition leader or relevant staff explain what ASMA’s and ASPA’s are and where to find documentation in the IAATO Field Operations Manual?

## **Compliance with ATCM Recommendation XVIII-1**

## (FOM Section 07 – Area & Site Specific Guidelines – General Useful Information)

### The ATCM document - *Guidance for those Organising and Conducting Tourism and Non-governmental Activities in the Antarctic* (Recommendation XVIII-1 - adopted at the Antarctic Treaty Meeting, Kyoto, 1994) and ATCM XLVI (2024) Resolution 2 General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic outlines obligations when organizing activities in Antarctica. According to your initial review of their permitting documents, were all activities conducted in accordance to this document?

## **Compliance with Standard Procedures for Station Visits**

(FOM Section 07 – Area & Site Specific Guidelines – Research Stations)

### Were Antarctic Research Stations visited?

### If so, were advance notification requirements for such visits taken into account (e.g., Palmer Station, McMurdo, Rothera or Signy Station)? (FOM Section 07 – Area & Site Specific Guidelines – Research Stations – ‘IAATO Standard Procedure for Station Visits’)

### Was the 72-hour advance notice adhered to for all other stations?

### If a previously scheduled visit to a research station was cancelled, was the station notified promptly?

### Did the program or station visit interfere with Antarctic scientific work? If so, please explain.

### Was the operator providing any support by transporting scientists, etc.? If so, please detail.

# Aircraft Operations

## Was the company being observed responsible for the air and ground handling operations? If not, and another company or National Party was responsible, please describe.

## Were flight operations efficiently coordinated with other air operations?

## Did the Air Operator/Provider participate in CATS (COMNAP Asset Tracking System)?

## Does operator have ADS-B fitted to all aircraft and do they have ground receivers at runways?

## In addition to the normal flight safety instructions, were clients given any additional Antarctic specific instructions?

## If flying in proximity to wildlife, did the aircrew follow ATCM Resolution 2 (2004) Guidelines for the Operation of Aircraft near Concentrations of Wildlife?

## Was the Antarctic Flight Information Manual (AFIM) readily available and used (by the operator, or their sub-contractors)?

## In general, were operations organized safely and efficiently at all times?

## Did you notice any malfunctions of aircraft and/or engines at any time? If so please describe.

# Field Camp Operation

## Safety and Contingency Planning

### Which Search and Rescue (SAR) measures were put in place for self-sufficient operations? In general, would you say that the principles of self-sufficiency and sound contingency planning were observed at all times?

### Were satisfactory flight safety drills conducted for all flights—intercontinental and within Antarctica—with all clients in attendance, and translated for non-English speaking clients?

### Were there comprehensive briefings on safety issues conducted in the field?

### Were clients advised to take precautionary measures to prevent accidents during particularly difficult weather conditions?

### Were clients advised of the necessity for suitable clothing in conditions that can be severe and inhospitable?

### Please list the number and qualifications of all medical personnel in the base camp.

### What medical facilities and equipment were available in the base camp? What measures were taken for flights and parties leaving base camp into the field?

### Was there emergency equipment available onboard aircraft, when parties left camp as well as at base camp? If so, please include a list.

### Please describe the Emergency Medical Evacuation Response (EMER) that was in place.

### What communication equipment was located in the base camp and what communication equipment was carried by aircraft and field parties?

### How were field parties accounted for and how often were they required to report in to the base camp?

### For flights within Antarctica, were passenger manifests kept and if so, where were copies held?

### Were field flights and field parties tracked remotely? If so, how were they tracked?

## Waste Management

(FOM Section 08 - ‘IAATO Statement on Waste Management’)

### Did the field camp operation comply with Annexes II and III of the Environmental Protocol (this refers to biosecurity and steps to prevent the introduction of non-native species, and waste management procedures, etc.)?

### Who was the designated person responsible for waste management?

### Was the waste management plan easily available in the field and was it adhered to?

### Were field staff and clients all briefed on the waste management plan as appropriate to their role and responsibility?

### Please summarize the key elements of the waste management plan:

### Was there oil spill equipment readily available, should an incident occur in Antarctica?

### Were poultry products separated out from other food garbage and how were they ultimately disposed?

### Was there a separate receptacle for battery disposal and how were they ultimately disposed? Does this follow the EIA/IEE and/or authorization?

# IAATO Standards and Regulations

## General Conduct of the Tour Operator

### Did the operator support the basic mission of IAATO – which is to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic? (<https://iaato.org/about-iaato/our-mission>/)

### Was the expedition well organized and carried out, with no obvious violations of IAATO requirements? Were the activities generally conducted with a high degree of professionalism?

## Operations Manager and Staff

### Was there a Field Operations Manual (IAATO or similar tailored to the operation) in the field? Was it useful and used?

### What was the standard client-to-staff ratio, and was it maintained in camp?

### Did the client-to-staff ratio vary according to different activities, if so please give details?

### Did at least 80% of the staff have relevant experience and 50% of whom have previous experience in Antarctica?

### Had any of the staff, officers, crew taken the appropriate IAATO Online Field Staff Assessment? Please detail which staff members and their onboard role (e.g., Jane Blogs EL, Jo Bloggs AEL).

### Please enclose names of staff members, areas of specialty and years of polar (Arctic and Antarctic) or other relevant experience.

### If the field camp managers were changed, was there a handover procedure?

### Were you introduced to clients, and invited to staff briefings?

## Passenger and Crew Briefings

4.3.1 Was the crew briefed on Recommendation XVIII-1 and/or ATCM XLVI (2024) 2 General Guidelines for Visitors to the prior to the start of the season?

### Were the field crew provided with copies of the Visitor Guidelines? (FOM Section 07 – Overarching Guidelines)

### If new field crew embarked for this particular expedition, were they briefed accordingly by the operations manager? If so, how?

### Was the IAATO Safety and Conservation Briefing (PowerPoint presentation, Deep Field Version) given prior to arriving in Antarctica? If not, why not?

### Was this a mandatory briefing and if so, how was this carried out?

### Please provide safety and conservation briefing used in the field.

### Were copies of Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic (ATCM Resolution 3 (2011)) available for crew and guest reference?

### Were copies of the guidelines provided to non-English speaking clients in one of the following additional languages: Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, German, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese?

## Biosecurity Measures

FOM Section 07 – Biosecurity Operational Procedures – ‘IAATO Boot, Clothing and Equipment Decontamination Guidelines’, ‘IAATO Don’t Pack a Pest’, & ‘Biosecurity Disinfection’)

### What biosecurity measures were taken prior to departure for Antarctica (for both clients and any equipment)?

### Was there a briefing done and a clothing check organized so that all precautions were taken to avoid the translocation of seeds and other organisms to Antarctica?

### Did clients clean their backpacks, camera bags, tripods and clothing (particularly Velcro attachments and pockets) to avoid the possible translocation of diseases?

### Was there a thorough cleaning of all gear (e.g., full boot and clothing decontamination incl. vacuuming) done between distinct regions? Which disinfecting solution was used?

## Activities at Base and Field Camps

### How many personnel were in the camp at one time?

### How many field crew/sub-contractors were in the camp? Provide their numbers and explain their role.

### Did the field staff periodically remind the visitors of appropriate codes of conduct and awareness of hazards, environmental features and scientific equipment?

### Did the field staff provide educational information?

### Did clients, field staff and air crew comply with ATCM Recommendation XXVIII-1, Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic?

### Was there a particularly effective way to manage clients organized by the staff? If so, please describe.

## Visits to Wildlife Sites

### Were the air crew and field guides experienced in polar wildlife?

### Was a briefing or announcement made prior to landing to advise on the peculiarities of the site being visited, the expected conditions, possible boundaries, behavior around wildlife, and any other relevant safety and environmental issues? Were passengers advised of the necessity for suitable clothing in conditions that can be severe and inhospitable?

### Did the field staff set clear boundaries and remind visitors of required distances and proper behavior around wildlife?

### Did the aircrew and field guides comply with ATCM XXVII Resolution 2 (2004) Guidelines for the Operation of Aircraft Near Concentrations of Birds in the Antarctic?

## Other Activities

### Were there other types of activities conducted, such as kite skiing or snowmobiling? If so, please describe.

### Were these activities described in the EIA/IEE and Advance Notification?

### Were these organized safely and efficiently at all times? Please give a short description.

# **Other Observations and Recommendations**

Please elaborate on any other comments or recommendations regarding the operations being observed.

# Other Observations and Recommendations

**For the Observer:**

**Below summarize the items noted in sections 1-6 where there were discrepancies noted with ATCM or IAATO policies/documents as well as issues noted regarding the ability to complete the observation, by populating a table for each item.**

**For the Operator:**

**Please review the below summary created by the observer and provide a response for each item noted by the observer. The response may be further clarification regarding the item or next steps that the Operator is doing to address the item.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item 1** | | |
| **Section:** | **SubSection:** | **Question:** |
| **Detail of the Item Noted by the Observer:** |  | |
| **Operator Response:** |  | |
| **Date of Operator Response:** | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item 2** | | |
| **Section:** | **SubSection:** | **Question:** |
| **Detail of the Item Noted by the Observer:** |  | |
| **Operator Response:** |  | |
| **Date of Operator Response:** | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item 3** | | |
| **Section:** | **SubSection:** | **Question:** |
| **Detail of the Item Noted by the Observer:** |  | |
| **Operator Response:** |  | |
| **Date of Operator Response:** | | |

**(If there are more than three items identified, copy and paste “Item 3”, as needed and update the numbering)**

**Thank you for your time and attention and we hope you had an enjoyable trip.**