

IAATO Guidelines for Short Overnight Stays in Antarctica

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

Prior to offering the activity, please ensure that camping, or short overnight stays are included in your operators permit conditions (Advance Notification and EIA)

Camp Site Selection

- Campsites should be located away from vegetated sites and a reasonable distance (150m) from wildlife concentrations, avoiding any sites of historical interest or scientific stations.
- The siting of the camp should be a safe height above sea level, due to the potential of breaking waves coming ashore after collapse of icefalls. These 'mini tsunamis' can be propagated from icefalls miles away across open water.
- 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 should not be pitched between the sea and wildlife access routes colonies and/or marine mammal haul outs.
- If using a site with ATCM Site Guidelines, ensure that visits between certain hours (e.g., 10pm and 4 am) are permitted.
- Make sure the numbers going ashore are within the limits in the guidelines.

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 and for camping on snow, ice or bare rock.
- All camping equipment, most particularly tent bases and mats, must be cleaned thoroughly with disinfectant after each use ashore.
- As conditions can change rapidly, make sure campers have clothing and equipment suitable for the worst weather.

Briefing

- Before camping, preferably on board and on shore, guests should be thoroughly briefed. This briefing should include the following:
- No food or drink is to be taken 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 can increase the likelihood of hypothermia.



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 should 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 solid 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 maintain 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 can wake up a staff member at any time if necessary.
- Zodiacs and drivers should be on standby at the ship at all times.

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 holes and the flattening of any snow sculptures.