

IAATO Observation Requirements for Operator and Observer

IAATO Observer Program

All IAATO Operator companies are required to carry an IAATO-approved observer during the first Antarctic season of a new-build/newly converted vessel or during the first year of operation of a new deep field camp, unless exempted by the Executive Committee on the advice of the Membership Committee.

Additionally, each IAATO vessel or deep field camp is required to be observed once every 5 years of Antarctic operation.

A. Observer Qualifications:

To insure adequate knowledge of IAATO procedures and protocols, every IAATO Observer must take and pass either the IAATO Expedition Leader Online Assessment or a new Online Observer Assessment (to be launched for the 2019-20 season). In addition,

1. An IAATO observer cannot be a member of the operator company's paid expedition/office/contracted staff.
2. The observer cannot be an IAATO Operator.
3. An observer can be IAATO Secretariat paid staff.
4. IAATO provides no salary compensation for Observers unless the observer is part of the IAATO Secretariat.
5. The observer should have two or more of the following qualifications:
 - a. Antarctic national program work experience involving in-depth knowledge of Antarctica;
 - b. Antarctic work experience on board commercial tourism vessels or land-based tourism;
 - c. Experience in environmental management in wilderness areas;
 - d. Experience in environmental monitoring and/or knowledge of Polar Regions ecosystems;
 - e. Experience in Tourism Management and Sustainable Tourism.

B. IAATO Secretariat Responsibilities:

1. The IAATO Secretariat will appoint an observer for the Operator. When possible, this observer will be appointed six months prior to the expedition.
 - a. The Observer's CV will be reviewed by the IAATO Secretariat as well as the Operator.
 - b. The IAATO Operator has the option of refusing a proposed Observer.
 - i. Should this happen another Observer will be appointed.
2. Where appropriate, IAATO will appoint an observer with specialist skills (e.g. waste management or navigational expertise).
3. Effort will be made to coordinate a convenient departure date and an observer whose expertise matches the company's operations so that the observation is a positive experience for all involved.
4. If available, IAATO will provide the observer a copy of a previous observer report for the vessel or deep field operation to be observed.
5. IAATO will provide the observer with the IAATO Observer Report Checklist.
6. In preparation of the voyage or land-based operation and prior to departure the following will be provided for the Observer:
 - a. Economy-class round trip airfare, hotel, reasonable meal/travel expenses, and airport departure taxes;
 - b. Initial coordination of communications between the observer and the operator;
 - c. An IAATO Non-Disclosure Agreement, to be signed by the observer and returned to IAATO
 - d. Any other relevant IAATO documentation or policies
7. IAATO will circulate the completed observer report to the Membership Committee and all operators



C. IAATO Operator Responsibilities:

1. No less than three months prior to departure, the operator should send to the observer (a) all pre-trip information provided to passengers and (b) all forms, especially medical forms, required to be completed and returned by passengers.
2. No less than one month prior to departure, the operator should send the following to the Observer and copy to IAATO's Director of Governance and Administration (electronic copies): Note: If the operator uses a third party/charterer to distribute pre-trip information, the operator is still responsible for sending the observer the appropriate information.
 - a. A complete list of expedition staff and their specific Antarctic experience.
 - b. The Advance Notification and Environmental Impact Assessment, including any updates or supplements.
 - c. Authorization letter by competent authority and/or authorization by appropriate government, or relevant acknowledging documents.
 - d. Acknowledgement that the current IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM) will be available on board, or in camp, for use by all expedition personnel.
 - e. The operator must certify to the observer that all ship/airplane schedules and contact information have been brought up-to-date and submitted as appropriate to IAATO and that IAATO Emergency and Member Contact (EMER) information has been checked and updated in the IAATO database.
3. The observer will be provided with a berth or bed.
4. The observer is invited to attend expedition staff briefings and planning meetings where appropriate in order to gain better insight into the overall operation and planning.
5. If appropriate, the observer can be invited by the Operator member company to give a presentation or lecture on their area of expertise during the trip.
6. At no time will an observer be put in a position where their integrity could be compromised, or the validity of the observer report brought into question.
7. If a medevac is needed for any reason, the company should treat the observer as they would any other passenger.
8. At the conclusion of the expedition, the operator should confirm to the observer that all Post Visit Site Reports (PVRs) and End-of-Season Report (EOS) are submitted to IAATO and appropriate government entity(s), according to internal company policy.
9. The operator should arrange to discuss the conclusions of the report with the observer prior to disembarkation.
10. The final observer report should be submitted by e-mail to the Secretariat within two weeks of the conclusion of the trip;

D. Observer Responsibilities:

1. The observer must have a valid passport and secure appropriate visas if required. (e.g. Argentina, Chile, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, etc.). Passports must NOT have an expiration date within six months of departure.
2. Provide the company with necessary documents consistent with all passengers' requirements, such as medical certificate, proof of emergency medical/evacuation/repatriation insurance coverage, etc.;
3. Prior to booking, the observer will coordinate, transport to and from their home airport with the IAATO Secretariat;
 - a. Any deviations from standard routing or extended days will be at the observer's own cost.
4. The observer will be expected to follow the Operator's passenger terms and conditions.
5. A draft report and/or any concerns must be discussed with pertinent expedition and/or home office staff before the end of the expedition;
6. The final observer report should be submitted by e-mail to the IAATO Secretariat and operator member company within two-weeks of the conclusion of the expedition;
7. The observer must have evacuation/trip cancellation/interruption insurance in an amount sufficient for the region of Antarctica to which they are traveling;
 - a. If the observer does not have insurance which covers Antarctic evacuation/repatriation, then insurance must be procured prior to the departure and reasonable costs will be reimbursed by IAATO.
8. The observer must bring appropriate personal foul weather clothing and boots, if not provided by the Operator;
9. While on board or in camp, the observer must attend all safety and other appropriate briefings, lectures where appropriate, and participate in and/or be included on all landings or excursions.
10. No gifts of any kind, other than those offered to other passengers, should be accepted by any observer, at any time.