



IAATO Recommendation Note for Operations on Coastal Crevassed Terrain

This document is intended to remind operators and staff of considerations and hazards posed for operations in areas of known and potential crevasses (SEE ANNEX 1)

CREVASSES ARE HAZARDS THAT CAN CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH.

It is vital to ensure safe operations that all levels within companies have an awareness of the very real dangers associated with crevasses.

The constant environmental changes happening in Antarctica will require a continuous re-assessment of our approach to activities at all sites. This is especially important for long used landing sites, such as Neko Harbour, that are known to have crevassing.

- Operators are strongly advised to have suitable and sufficient risk assessments and procedures in place when operating in areas of known or potential crevasses. This should include the presence of a crevasse rescue kit(s) at landing sites and suitably **experienced** and trained staff to effect a rescue.
- Operators should ensure that any Staff making real-time decisions ashore are suitably experienced and **qualified** to make a safe assessment of the site and a suitable operational plan for guest operations.

There may be crevasses at all landing areas with permanent snow cover. It will be necessary at these sites to assess the area and put any necessary precautions in place to minimize the risk of a crevasse incident.

Examples of these precautions include, but are not limited to:

- Probing of a site by a roped advance party made up of suitably experienced and **qualified** staff
- Flagging routes and marking common approach paths
- Use of staff at junctions, corners, and vulnerable points
- Review of site guidelines and **seasonal** IAATO information pertaining to crevassed locations
- Reconnaissance by drones may be carried where permitted only in conjunction with suitable/qualified experience
- **Only experienced and qualified individuals or groups should approach unsurveyed areas**

IF UNCERTAIN STAY AWAY OR CONSIDER THE AREA AS POTENTIALLY CREVASSED

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

- **Visual clues** to a crevasse's presence are unreliable and not always present, especially in poor light or after fresh snow. 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 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.