

**ZION NATIONAL PARK
COMMERCIAL USE AUTHORIZATION PROGRAM**

**2023 OPERATING PLAN FOR
GUIDED INTERPRETIVE HIKING TOURS (Level III)**

1. Authorized Use Defined:

Interpretive Services: Guided Interpretive Hiking Tours (Level III) are organized groups of one to 15 persons traveling on an itinerary which has been packaged, priced, or sold as a “guided hiking tour” of authorized trails in Zion National Park (reference Permitted Areas below). Level III groups consist of no more than 15 people including group leaders. Guides provide an educational forum through the use of interpretive methods and concepts for the preservation and protection of park resources in conjunction with the management objectives of Zion National Park. Such tours must provide natural and/or cultural resource information about the park as well as safety and resource protection messages. Only services defined above may occur under this authorization.

2. Authorized Use Areas Defined:

Permittee may have more than one group on any one trail at one time provided the total amount of all groups on any one trail does not exceed 15 people, including group leaders.

For Level 3 Permits: (15 People or less)

- West Rim Trail from Shuttle Stop 6, the Grotto to Scout Lookout Only. (may not continue on West Rim Trail past Scout Lookout)
- Angels Landing (Permit Required – max 2 separate groups of 6 people + 1 guide per group)
- Canyon Overlook Trail
- Court of the Patriarchs Overlook Trail
- Grotto Trail
- Kayenta Trail
- Lower, Middle, and Upper Emerald Pools
- Narrows but not into or above Orderville Canyon (1.5 miles north of Riverside Walk)
- Pa’rus Trail including signed river access points
- Riverside Walk
- Sandbench Trail (November through February)
- Timber Creek Overlook Trail
- Watchman Trail
- Weeping Rock Trail
- Observation Point Trail (only from Weeping Rock Trailhead) *
- Weeping Rock Trailhead to mouth of Echo Canyon (not into Echo Canyon) *
- Hidden Canyon Trail to mouth of Hidden Canyon (only from Weeping Rock Trailhead to end of chains) *

Trails marked with an asterisk (*) may be closed for an extended amount of time. All trail closures MUST be observed. Travel to Observation Point is prohibited from the East Mesa Trail or East Rim Trail as they travel through designated wilderness areas.

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Angels landing Pilot

The Angels Landing pilot permit program for commercial users will transition to a first-come first-served permit system starting February 01, 2023. From January 01, through January 31, 2023, CUA holders will continue using the 2022 permit system processes by submitting itineraries for hiking dates in January 2023 only. Starting Feb. 01, 2023, the new first-come first-served permit system will be activated and utilized for obtaining Angels Landing permits. Each CUA holder will be required to have a commercial account in Recreation.gov to obtain permits. Commercial users with an existing Recreation.gov account may utilize their current commercial account (see [FAQs](#)).

Starting February 1, 2023, commercial activities to Angels Landing will be limited to **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday ONLY**. Permits will be issued through recreation.gov, with the CUA holder paying the \$6.00 reservation permit application fee (up to 6 permits) **per reservation** and \$3.00 per-person use fee.

High Season

Twenty-four (24) permits per day will be available on a first come, first serve basis during high season (March through November). Maximum group size is limited to 6 guests plus one guide. Two groups per CUA holder per day is permissible in high season. Each group must be accompanied by a guide and each group must be separated on the trail by a minimum of 15 minutes.

Low Season

Eight (8) permits per day will be available on a first come, first serve basis during low season (December through February). Maximum group size is limited to 6 guests plus one guide and is limited to one (1) group per CUA holder per day during low season.

A CUA holder may guide individuals or groups (up to 6 people) that have obtained public lottery permits **and have independently approached a guiding service**. Guides or CUA holders may not enter the public lottery on behalf of commercial clients. Entering the public lottery or advising and/or soliciting clients to enter the public lottery for commercially guided services is a violation of this CUA.

FAQs, and more information are available by visiting the Zion National Park Commercial Use Authorization webpage: [Commercial Use Authorization - Zion National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

This is a pilot program; it is expected that changes will be ongoing as we continue to monitor and adapt the system in the second year of this program. Conditions are subject to change during the 2023 operating year. Notice of change will be given in writing.

3. Unauthorized Use Defined:

Guiding in any area of the park not authorized in section 2 is a violation of this permit. Hiking in wilderness areas or to cultural/archeological resource sites is prohibited and will result in punitive actions

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Social trails (informal, non-designated trails between two locations) are not authorized for CUA holders use

This authorization does not allow for the use of bicycles (human powered or e-bikes) You may package, price, sell multi-adventure tours, for multi-days, or even the same day, but hiking and biking must be separate activities (i.e. riding a bike to the trailhead to lead a guided hike is prohibited). Leading guided biking under this authorization is a violation of this permit and will result in punitive actions.

Public Use Obstruction: Permitted groups are sharing visitor facilities with the general public. This permit does not convey any priority use of any park areas including park trails, roadside pullouts, parking areas, picnic areas, etc. Permittees are responsible for the conduct of their clients and must advise clients to stay on trails, walk single file, and allow the public to pass. The use of tripods on trails is prohibited by permittees or clients (monopods are authorized). Tours must not interfere with the general visiting public.

Laws and Policies: A Commercial Use Authorization does not authorize permittees to facilitate any activities or actions that are prohibited in the park. For more information on park regulations visit: <http://www.nps.gov/zion/learn/management/lawsandpolicies.htm>. Permit violations can result in punitive action (fine, revocation of permit and or arrest) against both the representative (guide), and the permittee.

Shuttle Bus Embarkation: Permittee may not commence shuttle ridership within the park at the Human History Museum or Canyon Junction shuttle stops. All up-canyon shuttle ridership must commence at the Zion Visitor Center. Groups may disembark the down-canyon shuttle at any stop (but not to catch an up-canyon shuttle).

Shuttle Bus Onboard Interpretation

No onboard interpretation from CUA guides while onboard park shuttle buses. Answering incidental questions from CUA guides clients is permissible.

Shuttle Etiquette: Preferential treatment for CUA holders will not be permitted. The following activities are prohibited: No bus and/or trailer for your group only, instructing driver where to stop or not stop along the shuttle route, use of the public address system on the bus park shuttle to conduct an interpretation tour, and no cutting in line to be boarded first at the Visitor Center. These types of activities will put your CUA at risk of revocation.

4. Guide Requirements:

All Guides must be identifiable as employees of the permittee: This can be accomplished by nametags and/or company identifiable clothing/accessories/hats. Company vehicles must also be identifiable.

Acknowledgement of Permit Conditions: All guides and drivers are required to submit an online acknowledgement of CUA permit conditions before leading and/or driving tours into Zion National Park. This form is available online by visiting: [2023 Zion Guided Interpretive Hiking Level III Conditions Acknowledgement Form](#)

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Commercial Use Form: (formerly Attachment "E" form) Guides are required to fill-out the online Commercial Use Form prior to entering the park. Also required to submit when guiding Angels Landing public lottery individuals or groups (up to 6 people) **that have obtained lottery permits and independently approached a CUA holder for guiding service** (see Angels Landing FAQs for details). Any last-minute changes to itinerary or group number must be updated within 24 hours using the online form. The online form is located at [2023 Commercial Use Form: Zion National Park](#). This link is also available in your fully executed CUA.

For additional guide resources visit: <https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/booklist.htm>

Medical Certifications: All guides must have a valid driver's license and current medical certifications at minimum in basic first aid and CPR. These certifications must be on file with the Commercial Services Office. It is the permittees responsibility to keep this information up to date.

Guides are responsible for making sure clients have sufficient drinking water and nourishment for the duration of the planned activity and related weather conditions.

5. Speed Limits, parking, and vehicle requirements:

Speed Limits: Permittee and permittee's employees must follow all applicable traffic laws and posted speed limits throughout the park. Operating a vehicle at a speed in excess of the speed limit is prohibited. **The passing of motor vehicles is prohibited throughout the park.**

Parking: No Level III Commercial Use Authorization holder is permitted to park at the Human History Museum or the Canyon Junction (junction of the Scenic Drive and Zion Mt. Carmel Highway). Parking and stopping along park roads is prohibited except at designated parking areas or pull-offs. All vehicles must be kept on established roadways, and there must be no interference with pedestrians or other traffic in the park. All vehicles must park in designated parking spaces. **Parking and stopping in shuttle bus stops is prohibited during Zion shuttle bus operating season.**

- 15 passenger vans without trailer: May park in any authorized parking space designated for a standard sized vehicle (excluding Zion Scenic Canyon Drive unless in possession of overnight lodging reservations).
- 15 passenger vans with trailer: May only park in the oversized vehicle parking lot adjacent to the Zion Canyon Visitor Center (37.201240, -112.985378), or in the town of Springdale.

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Visitor Center Shuttle Stop

**15 Passenger Van *WITH* Trailer
Parking**

Vehicle Requirements: Gear may be tied to the top of the vehicle, carried inside of the vehicle, or transported in a trailer, but must not be attached to the sides of the vehicle.

Vehicles used while conducting interpretive service must have company identification visible on the driver's side of the vehicle. The park reserves the right to refuse entry to any previously undeclared driver or vehicle.

6. Closures and Public Use Limits:

The Zion Canyon Scenic Drive is limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, shuttle buses, private vehicles driven by Lodge guests with lodging reservations, and 16+ capacity passenger buses (with lodge reservations) during the shuttle season (typically mid-February through November, subject to change). Travel in Zion Canyon above the Lodge is restricted to all motor vehicles except Zion National Park shuttle buses and administrative traffic. Permittee's vehicles that do not meet the above criteria are prohibited from traveling on the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive during the shuttle season (unless in possession of overnight lodging reservations as stated above, a valid Red Permit must be displayed and visible in windshield) Visit www.nps.gov/zion for more information on the park's shuttle system. Addition official seasonal or emergency closures of roads, trails, or public areas must be observed by permittee.

Additional Area Closures: Behind administrative offices, employee housing areas, behind locked gates, near water tanks, beyond fences, on service roads, and in construction areas. Any addition official seasonal or emergency closures of roads, trails, or public areas must be observed by permittee.

7. Accidents/Injuries/Illness:

All accidents involving property damage, injuries, and/or medical problems must be reported to the park immediately at a ranger contact station or by calling (435) 772-3322. All such information must

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also be relayed by the permittee to the Commercial Services Office within 24 hours via email to zion_commercialservices@nps.gov.

8. Resource Protection:

All permittees are required to communicate the following messages to clients receiving interpretive service:

- Group leaders should be aware of current local conditions, flood levels, and flash flood warnings. This information can be obtained by stopping at the Visitor Center.
- Collecting or removing from the park any natural or cultural resource, or damaging or defacing any natural or cultural resource is prohibited.
- Stay on the trail in order to protect delicate vegetation and soils.
- In developed areas, the disposal of human waste anywhere other than in designated locations or fixtures provided for that purpose is prohibited. In non-developed areas, the disposal of human waste within 100 feet of a water source, high water mark of a body of water, a campsite, or within sight of a trail is prohibited (36 CFR 2.14). The preferred option for human waste disposal is a removal system such as a “[Restop 2](#).” If a removal system is unavailable a 4- to 8-inch deep “cat hole” can be used. Toilet paper must be carried out.
- Take only pictures - leave no evidence of your visit.
- All food scraps (fruit peels, nut shells, etc.) are considered trash and must be disposed of properly. It is a violation to feed the wildlife, including squirrels.
- Smoking on trails is highly discouraged. Smokers must use caution when smoking to prevent igniting a wildfire. Cigarette butts are trash and must be packed out for proper disposal. Trip leaders/guides should check fire conditions for current restrictions.
- Vehicles must not idle their engines when parked. Vehicles that sit with engines idling create unacceptable amounts of noise and air pollution within Zion National Park.

Nighttime Activities: Due to the sensitivity of nighttime resources in Zion National Park, all requests to facilitate nighttime hiking tours must be submitted at least three weeks ahead to time to zion_commercialservices@nps.gov. All requests must include all proposed locations and dates/times of proposed nighttime activities.

9. Safety Precautions:

Permittees must post a safety notice and advise all participants to read this notice (and/or provide a safety talk before activities begin). Information contained in this notice must include, but not be limited to, water safety, environmental hazards (weather, floods, sun, temperature, etc.) and resource protection. Leaders should remind participants that heatstroke is a real danger in the desert. Participants should be advised to drink lots of water, eat snacks, and wear hats/sunscreen to minimize sun exposure. Safety information and weather conditions are available at park visitor centers and by visiting www.nps.gov/zion

Each guide must carry and maintain a kit for emergency medical care. The kit must be appropriate for group size and the nature of the activity and include a flashlight.

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Guides are responsible for making sure clients have sufficient drinking water and nourishment for the duration of the planned activity and related weather conditions.

10. Camping:

If the permittee requires camping within the park, reservations must be made through <http://www.recreation.gov> or by calling 877-444-6777. Permittee's groups of 7 or more people are limited to Group sites in the E Loop of Watchman Campground and group sites A, B, C and D in the South Campground. Each company regardless of the number of CUA permits held is restricted to one group site per campground, per night. **Group campsite maximum capacities are strictly enforced. Arriving with a group beyond the maximum capacity for the site reserved will result in the cancellation of your reservation.**

Permittee's groups of 6 or less people may reserve one individual campsite at either campground per night, per company.

Group size is defined by the itinerary the group is traveling on. Splitting of groups is not permitted.

Violations of camping regulations will be considered a violation of this permit and may lead to the revocation of your company's campsite reservation and/or Commercial Use Authorization.

11. Monitoring: The Superintendent shall have the right to monitor permittees activity for compliance with all aspects of this permit.

12. Entrance Fees:

Guided Interpretive Hiking Tours (Level III):

Each time permittees enter the park, they must identify themselves at a park entrance station or at the Kolob Visitor Center and must present a valid Commercial Use Authorization Permit (in its entirety) to park staff. This will enable park personnel to verify that you are on the approved list for commercial activities.

Fee Schedule (subject to change):

\$20.00 per participant individual entrance fee will apply to each participant (children 15 and under are free). Participants may use annual or lifetime federal recreational land passes for entry of the pass holder (valid ID required) and up to three guests traveling with pass holder.

Guides are exempt from entrance fees when facilitating a commercial activity.

Individuals or groups who have previously paid an entrance fee must show proof of prior payment.

No fee will be collected from an empty vehicle entering the Park for the purpose of picking up passengers.

Tunnel permit fees are required for any vehicle driving through the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway Tunnel that is 7 feet 10 inches (2.4 meters) in width or wider including mirrors, awnings, and jacks,

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and/or 11 feet 4 inches (3.4 meters) in height or higher is required to have a tunnel permit for traffic control at the tunnel. Vehicles over 13 feet 1-inch tall, single vehicles over 40 feet long, combined vehicles over 50 feet long, all bicycles, and pedestrians are prohibited from entering the tunnel. Pay \$15.00 for the tunnel permit at the entrance station before proceeding to the tunnel. Your tunnel permit is good for two trips through the tunnel for the same vehicle and same group within seven days of purchase.

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