



Commercial Use Authorizations FAQs

1. What is a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA)?

A Commercial Use Authorization is a business permit with the National Park Service which authorizes an individual, group, company or other for profit entity to provide specific visitor services and operate within a National Park area.

2. What does the Federal law (PL 105-391, Section 418) require?

The law requires that CUAs:

- Are accomplished in a manner consistent to the highest practicable degree with the preservation and conservation of park resources and values.
- Are consistent with the purpose for which the Park was established.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable management plans, park policies and regulations.
- Establish conditions for the protection (safety) of visitors and appropriate visitor services.
- Limit the liability of the United States Government.
- Require payment of a reasonable fee for issuance of an authorization and recover associated management and administrative costs.

3. Do you expect the CUA process to change in the future?

Yes. The National Park Service is in the process of drafting final regulations, at the national level, that cover appropriate operations under the CUA process.

4. Do I or my company, group or organization need a CUA permit?

A permit is required if you as an individual, organization or corporation provide any goods, activities, services, agreements, or other function for members, clients or the public which takes place at least in part of the National Park, uses Park resources and results in compensation, monetary gain, benefit or profit.

5. What constitutes a commercial tour or service?

A commercial tour or service consists of one or more persons traveling on an itinerary that has been packaged, priced, or sold for leisure/recreational purposes by an organization that realizes financial gain through the provision of the service.

6. Are there limits on the number of CUA permits that can be issued?

Yes. In response to Public Law 105-391, section 418, the superintendent cannot issue more CUA permits than are consistent with the preservation and proper management of park resources and values. It may be necessary for the superintendent to establish limits on the number of private individuals, institutional use and commercial use. One tool is to limit the number of commercial operators. Other tools may include limiting use of all types by time period, area, number of trips, user days, party size or other parameters.

7. Is there a cost for the permit?

Yes. The CUA fee is currently \$100 for a one year CUA. New and/or additional fees should be expected in future years.

8. What types of commercial activities are permitted under a CUA?

Gulf Islands National Seashore issues CUAs for commercial activities including recreational fishing, scuba lessons, waterfowl hunting, and water based tours. Other activities may be permitted, but not all activities are permitted in all locations. Please contact the park if you have specific questions.

9. How do I apply for a CUA?

Application instructions and packets may be downloaded from the Park website at: <https://www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/cua.htm>

Please read the application instructions and all attachments before applying for a CUA. Completed application packets must be mailed or faxed to the park. Emailed applications will not be accepted. Please be sure to include your current Certificate of Insurance and any required licenses/permits (e.g. USCG license).