



## Access to Canada for IFMGA Mountain Guides July 2016

Mountain guiding in Canada is regulated on almost all public lands. The Canadian public and government authorities take the protection of public lands very seriously. Keeping the wilderness clean, environmentally intact and un-crowded is highly valued.

Guiding in Canada is not protected by law and is not an automatic right granted to any Mountain Guide. To maintain access to Canadian wilderness, Mountain Guides must practice a high standard of environmental care, know about restrictions and regulations (limits on group sizes, camping, fire-building, etc.) and act in a professional, courteous manner. A guide (Canadian or foreign) breaking a rule set by a land manager puts future access for all guides at risk.

Most public lands require permits or licences for commercial use. In some areas, the ACMG can offer you access through permits we hold. In other areas we may be able to help you get permits from the appropriate agency. Some areas do not allow access for commercial guiding at all, even for Canadian guides. Prices for permits vary depending on the land jurisdiction.

All IFMGA guides are advised to contact the ACMG for assistance in obtaining legal access to Canadian mountains. Please contact the ACMG six to eight weeks before your trip to ensure you obtain current information and to allow time to complete paperwork.

The information in this document is subject to change.

### **Summary of Critical Steps**

#### **Before you leave your country:**

- 1. Research the area(s) you intend to use to learn regulations, access issues, extra fees etc.**
- 2. Contact the ACMG to discuss your intentions – we will advise you on permits, liability insurance and other matters that directly affect you.**
- 3. Check with Immigration Canada to determine whether you require a working visa.**

#### **While you are here:**

- 1. Carry all documentation for permits, liability insurance and IFMGA membership while guiding.**
- 2. Follow all regulations that apply to the area you intend to use (fire restrictions, camping/bivouac limitations, etc).**
- 3. Have a memorable trip to Canada!**

### **Contacting the ACMG**

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ACMG Executive Director  
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### **Reciprocity Requirements**

IFMGA members can access ACMG permits and liability insurance based on the following reciprocity requirements:

#### **American Mountain Guides Association:**

Reciprocity is offered to fully qualified Mountain Guides only.

Specialty Guides (Rock, Alpine, Ski) or Assistant/Apprentice/Aspirant Guides do not meet the IFMGA requirements for reciprocity (see below).

#### **Other IFMGA Associations:**

Reciprocity is offered to fully qualified Mountain Guides.

Aspirant Guides also qualify for reciprocity if they meet the requirements established by the IFMGA (they have been trained, assessed, and certified in all disciplines of Rock, Alpine, and Ski). Aspirant Guides must come to Canada with a Mountain Guide who will supervise the Aspirant, or Aspirants must work under the supervision of an ACMG Mountain Guide. Aspirant Guides must be identified when applying for Canadian permits and must prove their status with a letter from the Technical Director or President of their association, their membership card showing Aspirant status, or something similar.

Specialty Guides (e.g. the Austrian Ski Guide) do not qualify unless they meet the IFMGA requirements for Aspirant Guide status and are supervised by a Mountain Guide.

Questions about reciprocity or about supervision should be directed to the ACMG Executive Director.

### **Land Use Authorization**

Most public lands (national parks, provincial parks, or provincial crown lands) in Canada require permits or licences and liability insurance for commercial use.

If you are negotiating your own permits to guide in Canada, your own liability insurance may be acceptable to land managers. You will require a minimum of CAD\$2,000,000 indemnity per occurrence and your insurance must be valid in Canada. Please contact the appropriate land managers for assistance well before your trip. Contact information for some land managers is in the table at the end of this document but it is best to contact the ACMG Permit Manager to discuss acquiring your own permits – it can be complicated.

In some parks, additional fees and permits may apply for park entry, overnight stays in the backcountry, and/or use of facilities or huts. You must be aware of these fees and ensure that all members of your party have paid them as required.

### **ACMG Permits**

See the table of information about permits held by the ACMG at the end of this document. ACMG permits are for the use of independent guides with their own clients. Guide companies must negotiate their own permits with land managers.

To apply for an ACMG permit:

- Send us a copy of your valid first aid certificate. If you practice first aid skills as part of yearly professional guide training, send a letter from your guide association stating this is the first aid practice followed by your association.
- Send us copies of both sides of your IFMGA identification card. We must see your photo, name and guide association yearly validation stickers, plus your IFMGA yearly validation stickers, all up to date.
- For the National Parks licence only, you must provide Interpretive Guides Association (IGA) certification (see the table to follow).

- You can purchase ACMG liability insurance (see below).
- Pay permit and liability insurance fees. Credit card or electronic fund transfer payments are accepted; email the Permit Manager for details.
- You become a restricted Visiting Guide member of the ACMG and will be bound by its code of conduct and bylaws (see [www.acmg.ca](http://www.acmg.ca) > About the ACMG > Governance, all listed documents). Restricted membership is valid for 60 consecutive days per year.
- You will be required to report your use of the permits to the ACMG Permit Manager after your trip is completed. Forms and instructions will be provided.
- Contact us at least six weeks before your date of arrival in Canada to ensure that liability insurance and permits will be in place for your trip. Without this amount of time, we cannot guarantee that everything will be in place in time for your trip. Without the proper permits in place, guiding on park land is illegal and may void your liability insurance policy

### **ACMG Liability Insurance**

IFMGA members wishing to join ACMG permits may purchase ACMG liability insurance. This insurance is for non-residents of Canada working intermittently (two months or less per year) in Canada. It provides CAD\$7,000,000 indemnity per occurrence and meets the conditions set by land managers for permits.

Current cost is CAD\$340 plus 5% Goods and Services Tax (GST) for 21 guiding days and CAD\$680 plus 5% GST for 60 guiding days ; these prices are in effect until 2017-03-31.

The territory covered by this insurance is worldwide. However, the policy is not valid for US citizens working in the United States. Non-US citizens require prior approval from the insurer for all working trips into the US.

As a condition of ACMG liability insurance, an ACMG waiver must be signed by each client in addition to waivers usually used by visiting guides. Information about the ACMG waiver will be sent when ACMG liability insurance is purchased.

### **Non ACMG Liability Insurance**

Visiting IFMGA guides may be able to use their own liability insurance to purchase ACMG permits. Send us the following information eight weeks in advance of your proposed guiding days in Canada, all in English, please:

- A copy of your certificate of insurance (showing effective dates, who is covered and coverage amounts)
- The territory covered by your policy
- A description of the business activities covered by your policy

We will ask that the ACMG and the land manager be named as additional insured to your policy; exact wording will be provided.

### **Permit Jurisdictions**

There are five land jurisdictions where mountain guiding activities commonly take place:

1. **Federal National Parks** in British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon Territories.
2. **British Columbia Parks** and Protected Areas.
3. **British Columbia Crown Lands** (all provincially owned lands in BC).
4. **Alberta Parks** and Protected Areas.
5. **Alberta Public Lands** (all provincially owned lands in AB).

You will need to know which jurisdictions you wish to work in. The ACMG can assist you if you are uncertain about these. See the table of information that follows for details about each jurisdiction.

### **Rescue and Emergencies**

In most locations local professional or volunteer rescue teams carry out technical mountain rescues, with exceptions noted below. The experience of these teams varies. The cost of rescues may be charged to the guide or the injured party. Insurance for guides and clients that covers such costs is highly recommended and is best obtained in your home country before entering Canada; there is no national scheme for mountain rescue in Canada.

***BC Parks, Recreation Areas, and Crown Lands:*** Professional rescue services and emergency response are limited in most British Columbia Provincial jurisdictions. Volunteer Search and Rescue (SAR) groups are activated to help when backcountry calls for help are made.

***Alberta Parks and Protected Areas and Crown Lands:*** Professional rescue services and emergency response are available in Kananaskis Country.

***National Parks:*** Professional rescue services and emergency response are available in Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, Yoho, Mount Revelstoke/Glacier and Waterton National Parks. A rescue is free of charge if you have purchased a pass to enter the park. These passes are available at major road entry points and from any parks information office. If you have entered a park and not purchased a pass, the cost of a rescue will be charged to the guide or the injured party.

***Communications:*** In some areas, help may be summoned by use of a VHF radio or cell phone, however, be warned that even where communications are possible, they are not always reliable. Guides should discuss options with the ACMG and/or local guides to assess whether radio or phone communication is possible or practical.

***Please note:*** Carrying VHF radios is common practice in Canada. In some cases, even where communications with rescue agencies is not possible, you may be able to contact other guides in the area. The ACMG guides' frequency is 173.640; it is non-exclusive use. Other emergency frequencies may be obtained from the ACMG when you register on our permits.

***Self-Rescue:*** Due to large mountain areas, long helicopter flight times and limited communications, be prepared to stabilize an accident victim and carry out a self-rescue, especially in the early stages of an accident.

See the following table for a summary of ACMG permits, rescue and contact information.

Land Jurisdiction	Land Manager	Parks included in ACMG permit	ACMG Permit Fee	Additional Requirements	Mountain Rescue	Direct Contact
Federal National Parks	Parks Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banff National Park</li> <li>Jasper National Park</li> <li>Yoho National Park</li> <li>Kootenay National Park</li> <li>Revelstoke/Glacier National Park</li> <li>Waterton Lakes National Park</li> </ul>	CAD\$60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpretive Guides Association (IGA) certification</li> <li>Glacier NP Rogers Pass Winter Permit</li> <li>Custodial Group permit (if needed)</li> <li>Alpine Club of Canada hut bookings, if needed</li> </ul>	<p>Banff: tel: 911 or 1-403-762-4506</p> <p>Jasper: tel: 1-877-852-3100</p> <p>Yoho: tel: 1-403-762-4506</p> <p>Kootenay: tel: 1-403-762-4506</p> <p>Revelstoke/Glacier: tel: 1-250-837-7500</p>	<p>See <a href="http://www.pc.gc.ca">www.pc.gc.ca</a> and choose the National Park you want to learn more about.</p> <p>IGA offers an online course at <a href="http://www.interpretiveguides.org">www.interpretiveguides.org</a> Go to Courses, Basic Knowledge, On-line Course. Pay for it, take the course and test on-line; send the confirmation of passing it to the ACMG Permit Manager.</p> <p>Glacier NP Rogers Pass Skiing: Parks Canada Winter Permit System -- English, German, French, Italian, Spanish translations at <a href="http://www.acmg.ca">www.acmg.ca</a> &gt; About the ACMG &gt; Join the ACMG &gt; Foreign Guides</p> <p>Contact the ACMG for more information about Custodial Group permits for clients under the age of 18 years.</p> <p>For hut bookings: Alpine Club of Canada <a href="http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca">www.alpineclubofcanada.ca</a></p>
As above	As above	Kluane National Park The ACMG permit does not include this park at this time.	N/A			See <a href="http://www.pc.gc.ca">www.pc.gc.ca</a> and choose Kluane National Park. Excellent resource for mountaineering around Mt. Logan.
Provincial Parks	British Columbia Parks and Protected Areas	<p>25 Parks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blackcomb Glacier and Garibaldi Parks (Whistler area)</li> <li>Stawamus Chief Park (Squamish)</li> <li>Bugaboo Park</li> <li>Mt Assiniboine Park</li> <li>Mt Robson Park</li> </ul>	CAD\$117		Emergency Management BC, report a disaster or emergency: Tel: 1-800-663-3456	See <a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks">www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks</a> , “Visiting Parks” to learn about the Park you are interested in. Contact the ACMG Permit Manager to see if the ACMG BC Parks permit includes that park.

Provincial Parks continued	Alberta Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kananaskis Country (includes Ghost River ice climbing, etc)</li> </ul>	CAD\$105		Tel: 911 and ask for “Kananaskis dispatch” to report emergencies only.	See <a href="http://www.albertaparks.ca/kananaskis-country">www.albertaparks.ca/kananaskis-country</a> , for lists of parks in Kananaskis Country, maps and more information.
Crown Land	British Columbia Crown Lands	<p>This land is outside of Parks but is provincially owned. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>land around most ski touring lodges</li> <li>terrain between the Bugaboos and Rogers Pass</li> <li>large Coast Range Icefields</li> </ul>	No fee	Commercial use on an ongoing basis requires a licence of occupation (tenure). Incidental use is permitted for periodic access. Contact existing tenure holders at least two weeks prior to trip to ensure there is no conflict.	Emergency Management BC, report a disaster or emergency: Tel: 1-800-663-3456	Contact the ACMG Permit Manager regarding the tenure system.
	Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development	This land is outside of Parks but is provincially owned		Commercial use may require liability insurance and authorization.	Depends on location in province but 911 should always be tried first.	Purchasing the ACMG Alberta Parks permit includes authorization to use some areas under this land management. Contact the ACMG Permit Manager for more information if needed.