INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO 18065

First edition
2015-03-01

Tourism and related services — Tourist services for public use provided by Natural Protected Areas Authorities — Requirements

Tourisme et services connexes — Services touristiques publics délivrés par les autorités des espaces naturels protégés — Exigences

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Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see the following URL: Foreword — Supplementary information.

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

Introduction

Natural Protected Areas (NPA) are created to preserve and conserve the endemic features, cultural heritage, and ambience of a specified area for the enjoyment of both present and future generations.

The initiative for setting up protected areas is no longer coming only or even mainly from the government.

NPA Authorities (NPAA) are responsible for ensuring the efficient and sustainable planning and development of tourist services conforming to legal requirements. Risk assessments promote the safety of the visitor and quality assessment of services mitigates impacts upon NPA's wildlife, flora, fauna, and communities.

When appropriately managed, tourist activities in NPA allow visitors to experience the natural environment and to learn about the importance of nature conservation at the same time.

Protected areas are established primarily to preserve some type of biophysical process or condition such as a wildlife population, habitat, natural landscape (including abiotic nature), or cultural heritage such as a community's cultural tradition.

Public use, tourism, and recreation can be part of the objectives of a NPA. Tourists visit them for their own enjoyment and, in doing so, benefit from understanding and appreciation of the values on which the area was established.

Tourism to NPA has grown and is now a significant element in the culture of modern society. Protected areas are very attractive settings for the growing demand for outdoor appreciative activities in natural environments.

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Through public use management processes, NPAA hold responsibility for ensuring that while visitors have opportunities to participate in their desired activities, they are aware of and uphold the NPA values. That is the objective of this International Standard.

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Tourism and related services — Tourist services for public use provided by Natural Protected Areas Authorities — Requirements

1 Scope

This International Standard establishes the requirements for tourist services provided directly by NPAA in order to satisfy visitors while giving priority to the NPA conservation objectives, excluding the marine protected areas.

NOTE These NPAs can be publicly or privately managed, managed by the community or by NGO, or managed by a mixture of some or all of these possibilities.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 7001, *Graphical symbols — Public information symbols*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1
carrying capacity
measure that addresses the question of how many visitors can be permitted into an area in any specific time, taking into account, at least, the risk of degrading the site, its physical capacity, and the visitors' experience

Note 1 to entry: These desirable limits measure the types and levels of sustainable use.

3.2
controlled camping area
defined geographical space with provision of services where people can pitch a tent for periods of time defined by NPAA and in which cleaning services are provided

3.3
information point
facility providing visitors with information and warnings to assist them in getting around the area

Note 1 to entry: Information points can be staffed (with attendants providing information) or unstaffed (only with information panel, brochures, etc.).

3.4
interpretation activities
visitor management tool that develops awareness and understanding of the NPA's cultural and natural environments and heightens recreation experiences and visitor satisfaction

Note 1 to entry: Interpretation activities stimulate visitors to learn and gain more appreciation of the values for which the NPA was established. Examples of interpretation activities are trail sight signs, field guides, guided walks or tours, interactive displays.

3.5
marked trail
signposted path or track made across the NPA to direct walking and trekking activities (on foot, by bicycle, on horseback, or by other means accepted by NPAA)

3.6
natural protected area
NPA
clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated, and managed through legal means or other types of efficient means to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values

3.7
natural protected area authority
NPAA
organization that has the responsibility of planning and managing the NPA

Note 1 to entry: It can provide services to visitors and manage facilities for public use.

3.8
nature workshop
seminar or course that provides education for participants to learn about nature, particularly flora and fauna and/or specific natural environments

Note 1 to entry: Specific infrastructure designed for educational aims, heritage interpretation, or contact with nature can be provided.

Note 2 to entry: Workshops can take place indoors or outdoors.

3.9
public use
programs, services, activities, and facilities provided within the protected area by the NPAA in order to bring the visitors closer to its natural and cultural values in a safe and ordered manner that guarantees the conservation, understanding, and appreciation of said values through information, education, and interpretation of the patrimony

3.10
public use services
attention provided specifically to individuals or groups of individuals to facilitate activities of public use

Note 1 to entry: Support of specific facilities and/or specialized personnel is usually required, although in some cases, operation can proceed without these requirements.

3.11
recreational area
adapted space used for enjoyment and leisure in a safe and convenient way

Note 1 to entry: Recreational areas are usually available with basic services provided such as cleaning services, tables and seats and, in some cases, also opportunities for visitors to purchase goods.

Note 2 to entry: This limited area can accommodate a broad range of education, outdoor recreation opportunities, and related facilities in ways that respect the natural landscape.

3.12
refuge
roofed structure created for shelter, rest, or an overnight stay for one or several days, generally used in relation to complicated itineraries

Note 1 to entry: Refuges can either be manufactured or part of the natural landscape.

Note 2 to entry: Refuges can be staffed and unstaffed.

3.13
visitor
person using the NPA for outdoor recreation and enjoyment of its natural and cultural values

Note 1 to entry: It includes international and domestic visitors.

3.14
wildlife exhibit
designated, controlled area where visitors are offered the opportunity to observe wildlife

Note 1 to entry: Physical barriers can be used to separate visitors from the species being viewed. Equipment for investigation of fauna to develop education or interpretative activities can be provided.

3.15
zoning
land-use planning process designed to manage the permitted uses and activities in an NPA

4 Approaches for public use

4.1 General

NPAA shall develop a policy and establish the criteria to evaluate the suitability of tourism activities, access and transportation by land, water, or air, taking into account the NPA's resources, values, and conservation objectives.

NOTE   These criteria can consider low impact, non-consumptive activities; promote education, and include small groups' activities.

NPAA shall provide guidelines for tourism and recreation activities and communicate these to the public.

NPAA shall define minimum level requirements for environmental performance of public use services and facilities.

Accessibility principles should be considered when establishing conditions to service provision and facilities (see Annex A).

4.2 Public use plan

NPAA shall establish and document a public use plan. Stakeholder consultation should be considered. This plan shall address the conservation, understanding, and appreciation of natural and cultural values through information, education, and interpretation of the patrimony and shall minimize the potential impacts generated by tourism.

NOTE 1   A public use plan can be called by different title. It can be one document or a series of documents.

The public use plan shall include the following:

a) public use zoning scheme;

b) monitoring of environmental impacts;

c) carrying capacity;

d) maximum number of visitors for facilities;

e) criteria to evaluate the suitability of tourism activities;

f) activities permitted and prohibited;

g) expected, suggested, and prohibited visitor behaviours;

h)   recreation management and facilities (staffed or unstaffed);

i)   use, information, and interpretation of visitors´ experience and visitors´ profile (such as surveys, questionnaires, etc.);

j)   accessibility considerations;

k)   safety;

l)   waste, cleaning, and maintenance;

m)   outsourcing;

n)   information and communication.

NOTE 2   NPAA can use these different approaches to monitor impacts: limits of acceptable change, visitor impact management, visitor experience and resource protection, visitor activity management process, the recreation opportunity spectrum, tourism optimization model, etc.

NPAA shall ensure that the public use plan is established, implemented, and maintained valid and updated and shall maintain records for public use plan reviews.

NPAA shall keep a record of the public use services offered, identifying the operating regime, managing company or concession holder, period of concession and gratuity or cost of the service for the visitor.

NPAA shall monitor number and type of visitor and their perception of use, information, and interpretation. This data shall be recorded at visitor centres and at staffed information points.

NOTE 3   Feedback can be obtained through comments, suggestions, complaints, and visitor satisfaction surveys.

4.3   Impacts of public use plan

NPAA shall monitor at least the following aspects:

a)   energy consumption (and gradually replace the most contaminating sources of energy);

It is recommended to gradually replace the most contaminating sources of energy. Renewable energy techniques (solar, wind, etc.) and appliances that use less energy are highly recommended. If possible, air conditioning systems/equipment should be avoided.

b)   water consumption;

c)   waste generated;

d)   use of harmful products;

e)   cleaning and maintenance;

f)   residual water of public use facilities;

g)   maximum number of visitors admitted is attained and in control, in order to prevent exceeding limit.

NPAA shall identify potential visitors' impacts on the environment and shall develop mitigation alternatives for the negative impacts.

NOTE 1   Potential negative impacts can include water, soil, air, noise, and physical pollution.

NPAA shall review the public use plan taking into account the results of the monitoring processes.

NOTE 2   The use of indicators can be a method for monitoring.

NPAA shall prepare an annual report of public use to include the most relevant data relating to monitoring and evaluation of public use and future improvement actions.

4.4 Staff

NPAA shall plan, develop, and record training activities for staff, volunteers, and concession holders according to their positions.

Staff should be trained in visitor and community relations, conflict resolution, risk management, wilderness first responder methods, waste management processes, ecological research and monitoring, and patrolling and law enforcement. Training should be in line with individual roles and levels of responsibility.

NPA staff, in direct contact with visitors, should be available to provide information, enforcement, and monitoring of trails and groups that travel into the most sensitive zones. The staff should be capable of giving this information in foreign languages.

5 Services provision

5.1 Access and reception

The NPAA shall define and communicate the admission conditions. This information shall include, at least, the following:

a) timetable and period of the year in which the area is open to the public;

b) restrictions regarding means of transport, access, and activities;

c) entrance fee, if any;

d) general recommendations for visitors, including groups;

e) contacts details in case of emergency.

The NPAA shall guarantee the visitor is welcomed and informed about public use services, safety, and low impact practices.

NPAA shall communicate regulations, arrange tours, and collect entrance fees if required. Usage, behaviours, and restrictions to visitors shall also be communicated and explained.

NPAA shall inform visitors which activities are restricted and can only be allowed with the help of a guide.

5.2 Information

5.2.1 General

NPAA shall communicate NPA values, public use services, safety, and negative low impact practices. NPAA shall provide this information on-site and make it accessible in advance. Information related to the access of NPA by public transport or other environmentally friendly means of transport shall be provided.

NPAA should establish a method to communicate with third parties.

NPAA shall give, at least, the following information to visitors (generally at the reception):

a) name of NPA and NPAA;

b) access conditions;

c) characteristics of the natural protected area, territory, and location of facilities (i.e. maps);

d) timetable;

e) services provided;