

Advisory: Standardization of Commercial Use Authorization Process for Operators of Road-based Commercial Tours

Beginning October 1, 2019, commercial tour operators will pay an entrance fee for each vehicle equal to the appropriate per-person entrance fee for each passenger. The NPS will also standardize commercial use authorization (CUA) requirements and CUA fees for road-based commercial tour operators beginning October 1, 2019.

What: All road-based commercial tour operators¹ must apply for and obtain a commercial use authorization (CUA) for every park in which they plan to provide tours. This entails:

- Obtaining a CUA for each NPS unit in which they operate;
- Paying required CUA fees, and;
- Submitting mandatory annual CUA reports after each CUA operating season (but not more frequently than once a year).

Associated fees: \$300 non-refundable annual CUA application fee upon submittal of application for each park and \$5 per-passenger fee CUA management fee.

- For parks charging entry fees, the tour operator will pay an entrance fee equal to the appropriate per-person entrance fee for each passenger upon entry to each park; \$5 of the fee paid upon entry for each passenger will cover the CUA management fee. Tour operators will not need to pay any additional per person fees.
- Individual park passes will not reduce the vehicle entrance fee paid by the tour operator.
- For parks without entry fees, the tour operator will submit \$5 per passenger CUA management fee with the annual report at the end of the operating season.

Forms: The NPS uses standard, CUA application and annual report forms approved by the Office of Management and Budget. NPS has an interactive map tool available on the [NPS CUA webpage](#) that identifies parks with CUA programs and provides links to those specific park CUA program webpages. Road-based commercial tour operators should visit the specific park CUA webpages to learn about the application process at that park.

Effective date: October 1, 2019. Until then, individual parks may require road-based commercial tour operators to obtain a CUA to conduct operations in a park. In those cases, parks must use the standard forms but the fees may vary from the standardized process set out above. Road-based commercial tour operators should visit the NPS CUA webpage to stay informed of individual park requirements until the standard process is implemented.

All fees stay within the collecting park and fund rehabilitation projects for buildings, facilities, parking lots, roads, and wayside exhibits that would enhance the visitor experience. The fees will also cover the administrative costs of reviewing, and processing CUA applications and required reports and monitoring activities conducted under CUA permits.

¹ A road-based commercial tour is one or more persons traveling on an improved roadway under an itinerary a company or individual has packaged, priced, or sold for leisure/recreational purposes. At the discretion of the park superintendent, a road-based commercial tour CUA may allow the provision of minor additional services such as guided day hiking.