

APPENDIX II: GUIDE/INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION

Alberta Parks recognizes that trained and certified guides contribute to high quality, safe and rewarding visitor experiences for the clients that choose to access guided opportunities in Parks. In many cases, guided experiences offer visitors the opportunity to safely participate in activities which they themselves may not have the expertise or experience to otherwise participate in. These certification requirements for guiding and instruction permits reflect Alberta Parks' work engaging with certifying bodies and organizations to understand the certification requirements and scope of practice that have been adopted for certain activities.

Guiding and Instruction Permits within Alberta Parks require the appropriate minimum levels of certification. Conditions of the permit may also identify other requirements or recommended courses to promote increased safety of the activities. Activities have been grouped according to similar characteristics and typical requirements. Unless otherwise stated, these requirements will apply to either guiding or instructing.

The following chart outlines pertinent information associated with the activity, including the recognized provincial certifying body (or bodies). Note that the Government of Alberta does not provide accreditation or indemnity to these organizations, and it is up to individual organizations to ensure adequacy of training, course materials, and insurance requirements for their respective scope of practice.

Alberta Parks at all times reserves the right to assess equivalences to certifications provided by certifying bodies from other jurisdictions, and/or demonstrated relevant guiding and instruction experience. Alberta Parks may from time to time contact recognized certifying bodies to seek further information and discuss equivalencies when appropriate.

Unless otherwise stated, the general requirements apply to all the guides responsible for leading the activity. To streamline application requirements, documentation will need to be submitted for the lead/instructor guide only, but may be submitted for additional guides/instructors at the discretion of the applicant.

The permit holder is responsible to ensure all guides and instructors covered under the permit are operating within their correct scope of practice and conditions of the permit, and to ensure that all guides or instructors covered under the permit have appropriate certifications.

General Requirements for all activities requiring a guide and instructing permit:

General Requirement	Comments
<p>Evidence of Certification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where certification is required, under this appendix, a valid copy of the required certificate or a letter from the certifying organization must be submitted for the lead guide/instructor, Certification may also be submitted for other guides/instructors covered under the permit.
<p>First Aid Certification</p> <p>Intermediate First Aid or higher-level certification is required for all guiding and instruction permitted activities. Intermediate First Aid may be obtained from:</p> <p>St. John’s Ambulance Canadian Red Cross</p> <p>(Other accredited first aid providers as identified on the <i>Approved First Aid Training Agency</i> list maintained by The Government of Alberta are also acceptable)</p> <p>Note: Intermediate First Aid is commonly referred to as “Standard First Aid”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All guides or instructors must meet the relevant first aid requirements under the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code. While the Alberta OHS code provides the base expectations, it is highly recommended that guides leading backcountry trips with clients hold an appropriate level of wilderness first aid training (typically 40-hr course or greater) considering the remoteness of the terrain, the availability of emergency medical services and the risks of the activity. Certain higher risk activities may require a higher level of certification for First Aid requirements if listed in the details below.
<p>Communication Devices</p> <p>All guides and instructors must have one or more reliable communication devices that are capable of conveying emergency calls in all of the expected areas that the guided activity will occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate communication devices could include: Cell phones, satellite phones, satellite text communicator devices, or certain types of radios. The appropriate device for a certain area depends on the level of service coverage for that area. Alberta Parks will not check or verify the appropriateness of communication devices prior to use. It is the applicants’ responsibility to ensure their communication devices are appropriate to the area the activity will occur within. Applicants may be requested at time of application for an emergency response communication plan and contact list for the permit holders’ activities.
<p>Scope of Practice</p> <p>All guides must operate within the scope of practice specified by their certifying body with their current level of certification and training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A guide’s scope of practice may be more restrictive than Alberta Parks’ permitting guidelines. If this is the case, the guide must follow their approved scope of practice, and the guiding and instruction permit does not convey Alberta’s approval for the guide to exceed their approved scope of practice.

Cycling, Class I E-Biking, and Non-Motorized Conveyances

- Applies to all non-motorized or power assist conveyances and technology types: mountain, road, hybrid, fat tire, and pedal assist e-bikes (class I).
- Permits may have restrictions on groups' size (ie. use of pelotons for road events, etc.)
- Required to comply with section 27 of the Provincial Parks (General) Regulation. Cycling is permitted on public roads, designated trails permitting cycling, or in another area as approved by an appropriately delegated department official.
- For winter fat biking or other mountain cycling see "non-motorized winter uses" for additional certification requirements.
- Certifications listed provide technical skill development and coaching training- additional evidence of experience and/or training may be requested for remote backcountry activities.

Mountain Biking- Trail Tours/Guiding & Sport Skill Development Training (Includes fat biking, and mountain e-biking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate level of BICP, PMBIA or NCCP certification for difficulty of activity, terrain and location. • NCCP certification applicable to skill and development training in facility zones. 	<i>International Mountain Biking Association (Instructor Certification Program)</i> <i>Professional Mountain Bike Instructors Association (PMBIA)</i>
Road or Paved Trail Cycling Tours/Guiding & Skill Development Training (Includes road/hybrid e-biking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate level of NCCP Certification (Skill Development/Training) or other equivalent certification. • No specific certification for road or paved cycling tours required but should have evidence and examples of previous experience and expertise. 	<i>Alberta Cycling Association- National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP)</i>

Climbing and Mountaineering

- Includes all classes of terrain (Classes 1-5 Terrain Class) on designated trails and off trail.
- Includes all seasons and terrain conditions and travel through terrain with an [Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale \(ATES\)](#) Class 0 to 4 rating.
- Includes ACMG apprentice guides operating within their scope of practice and with appropriate supervision.
- Requires 80-hour Wilderness First Aid or Advanced First Aid (CSA Z1201-17) certification

Backcountry Ski Touring Ski Mountaineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACMG Mountain Guide • ACMG Ski Guide • or equivalent certification 	<i>Association of Canadian Mountain Guides</i>
Alpine Mountaineering Ice Climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACMG Mountain Guide • ACMG Alpine Guide • or equivalent certification 	
Rock Mountaineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACMG Mountain Guide • ACMG Alpine Guide • ACMG Rock Guide • or equivalent certification 	
Top Rope Climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACMG Mountain Guide • ACMG Alpine Guide • ACMG Rock Guide • ACMG Top Rope Climbing Instructor • or equivalent certification 	

Equestrian and Pack Animal Uses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guides and instructors are expected to ensure that all animals are under their care and control at all times Conditions of the permit and/or specific rules may be applied depending upon locations, types of animals used, etc. (e.g. feeding, waste disposal, etc.) 		
Commercial Trail Riding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the requirements for a commercial trail riding permit and hold that permit. 	<p><i>No Certifying body is currently recognized for technical equestrian trip skills.</i></p> <p>Outdoor Council of Canada: Field Leader (Equine) recognized for value in trip leadership practices.</p> <p>Alberta Equestrian Federation- National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP)</p>
Other equestrian activities: Examples include: Sleigh rides, wagon rides, horse drives, sport development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional certifications not required. May require evidence of previous activities successfully completed or references to demonstrate competency in selected activity. NCCP certification (Alberta Equestrian Federation) applicable to skill and development training in facility zones. 	
Pack Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional certification required at this time. May require evidence of previous activities successfully completed or references to demonstrate competency in selected activity. Note: the use of certain pack animals, such as goats and sheep may require regular proof of documentation of animal health to limit risk of disease spread. 	

Hiking & Pedestrian Uses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicable to any pedestrian activities (by foot) within and outside of front country settings, facility areas Includes three season conditions (spring, summer, fall) where winter avalanche conditions do not exist. Certifications listed below includes apprentice guides operating within their scope of practice where that certifying organization has apprentice guides. Note: Hiking, Backpacking and Trail Running guides must take into account the scope of practice of their certification when considering the remoteness and access to emergency medical assistance of their proposed activity. Note: the use of routes for hiking and pedestrian activities will be reviewed by Parks Division, considering the routes proposed, and the expertise and qualifications of the lead guide. 		
Hiking, Backpacking and Trail Running (Class 1 or 2 terrain on designated trails and routes)	<p>Hiking and pedestrian activities <u>within</u> designated trails and routes in Class 1 or 2 hiking terrain (free of overhead alpine hazards, such as rockfall, cornices and avalanches).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACMG Mountain Guide ACMG Alpine Guide ACMG Hiking Guide IGA Hiking Guide OCC Field Leader or equivalent certification <p>Note: Class 2 terrain may encompass a high variability in complexity. When the chosen trails/routes include more than occasional use of</p>	<p><i>Association of Canadian Mountain Guides</i></p> <p><i>Interpretive Guides Association</i></p> <p><i>Outdoor Council of Canada</i></p>

	hands for balance or extensive route finding, the terrain should be considered class 3.	
Hiking, Backpacking and Trail Running (up to Class 3 Terrain on designated trails and routes.	Guiding hiking and pedestrian activities <u>within</u> designated trails and routes up to Class 3 hiking terrain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACMG Mountain Guide • ACMG Alpine Guide • or equivalent certification 	<i>Association of Canadian Mountain Guides</i>

Hunting and Fishing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides and their clients are expected to follow all relevant provincial and federal regulations and have the appropriate licences, allocations and/or tags. • A discharge of firearms permit is required for hunting. 		
Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional certifications required at this time. 	<i>No Certifying body is currently recognized.</i>
Hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding hunting activities requires holding a valid permit as an Outfitter or a Guide from the <i>Alberta Professional Outfitters Society</i>. • The permit must cover the appropriate class of game being hunted. 	<i>Alberta Professional Outfitters Society</i>

Motorized Uses (All seasons)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May only occur on highways, roads and trails or areas which have been specifically identified as allowing the type of vehicle and/or equipment specified. • Appropriate vehicle licencing and insurance associated with the type of vehicle is required, including a class 1 or 4 licence if transporting more than four clients. 		
Highway Vehicles (Viewing, bus tours, rallies, meets etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional certification required at this time. 	<i>Alberta Safety Council Canada Safety Council</i>
ATV, UTV, Motorcycle Trail Touring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATV or UTV Rider Safety Course or equivalent, or • Motorcycle essentials or equivalent 	
ATV or UTV Skill Development and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATV or UTV Safety Instructor Training or equivalent, or evidence of previously completed training delivered and/or additional instructor training completed. 	
Snowmobile Trail Touring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobile Operators Course or equivalent 	
Snowmobile Skill Development and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobile Operators course or equivalent and evidence of previously completed training delivered and/or additional instructor training completed. 	

Non-motorized Winter Uses

- Applicable to any non-motorized winter activities within and outside of front country settings, facility areas
- Includes apprentice guides operating within their scope of practice and with appropriate supervision.
- All guides and instructors operating in terrain with an [Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale \(ATES\)](#) Class 1 are required to have a base level of Avalanche Skills Training (AST 1- Avalanche Canada), understand the ATES and know how to access the basic resources and can identify avalanche terrain in the field.
- For winter sport facilities that are managed and controlled for avalanche hazard (such as a Nordic ski centre), there is no requirement for guides or instructors to have avalanche training.
- Note: the use of routes for hiking and pedestrian activities will be reviewed by Parks Division, considering the routes proposed, and the expertise and qualifications of the lead guide.
- Note 1: Guides must stay within their scope of practice and follow regional public avalanche danger forecasts in determination of appropriate travel within any avalanche terrain.

<p>Hiking, Backpacking, Snowshoeing and Trail Running (Class 1 and 2 on designated trails and routes)</p>	<p>On designated trails and routes (Class 1 and 2 terrain) within ATES Class 0 (Non-avalanche) terrain:¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACMG Alpine Guide • ACMG Mountain Guide • ACMG Hiking Guide (requires winter travel certification) • OCC Field Leader (requires winter course) • IGA Hiking Guide (4 season group management) <p>For activities on designated trails or routes (Class 1 or 2) within ATES class 1 (Simple) terrain¹ in addition to one of certifications listed above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avalanche Skills Training 1 (AST1) 	<p><i>Association of Canadian Mountain Guides</i></p> <p><i>Interpretive Guides Association</i></p> <p><i>Outdoor Council of Canada</i></p>
<p>Hiking, Backpacking, Snowshoeing and Trail Running (up to Class 3 Terrain on designated trails and routes.</p>	<p>For activities on designated trails or routes (up to class 3 terrain) for up to ATES class 4 terrain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACMG Mountain Guide • ACMG Alpine Guide 	<p><i>Association of Canadian Mountain Guides</i></p>
<p>Nordic Skiing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For facility areas and maintained Nordic ski trails in non-avalanche terrain. • Appropriate level of CANSI or NCCP certification for level of skiers, terrain and location. • CANSI and NCCP certification applicable to skill and development training in areas with maintained Nordic ski trails. <p>Note: certifications from ACMG, IGA, or the OCC pertaining to winter/ 4-season travel with associated technical Nordic ski skills may also be recognized as appropriate for Nordic ski touring.</p>	<p><i>Canadian Ski Instructor (CANSI)</i></p> <p><i>Nordiq Alberta- National Coaching Certification Program</i></p>

Dog Sledding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional certification required. Depending on opportunities available a competitive process may be used to issue permits to eligible dog sledding guides. 	<i>No Certifying Body is currently recognized.</i>
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Paddling and Non-Motorized Water Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guides and instructors must be certified to guide or instruct in the class of water they are guiding or instructing on, and are expected to have associated minimum swimming and rescue skills Activities have been split between the requirement for flatwater (e.g. lakes, ponds, and slow-flowing waterbodies), and swift-water (e.g. rivers, streams and fast-moving waterbodies) Must follow all appropriate federal and provincial regulations and certification requirements for applicable watercraft 		
Swimming Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swim Instructor 	<i>Lifesaving Society</i>
Kayaking, Canoeing, Stand Up Paddle Boarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate instructor level certification for the activity difficulty level and terrain (flatwater or swift water) Swiftwater rescue (Level II)-Royal Lifesaving Society recommended for Swiftwater activities. 	<i>Paddle Canada</i> <i>Lifesaving Society (Swiftwater rescue)</i> Outdoor Council of Canada: Field Leader (Paddling) recognized for value in trip leadership practices.
Whitewater Rafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate rafting certification from a professional certifying body. Certifying body requirements and certifications will be reviewed at time of permit application. Swiftwater rescue (Level II)-Royal Lifesaving Society recommended for Swiftwater activities. 	<i>Certifying bodies assessed at time of application.</i> <i>Lifesaving Society (Swiftwater rescue)</i>
Scuba Diving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate instructor level certification for the activity difficulty level and conditions. 	<i>Professional Association of Diving Instructors</i>

Boating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicable activities or technologies must follow federal nautical regulatory requirements, including certifications. Power boating includes all potential activities associated with the operation or use of the craft, e.g. power boats, water skiing, wake surfing, wake boarding, para-sailing, river tours, etc. 		
Power Boats Incl. Water skiing, wake surfing, wake boarding, river tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional certification required at this time. 	<i>No Certifying body is currently recognized.</i>
Sailing, Sailboarding, Para Sailing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CANsail Certified Instructor at the appropriate level recommended. 	<i>Sail Alberta</i>

Miscellaneous Activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities listed below do not have specific certification requirements identified but will be evaluated on a case by case basis. • Activities must occur in more controlled environments such as facility areas, and outside of avalanche terrain. • Refer to requirements for hiking and non-motorized winter uses for activities which occur on terrain that is higher than class I designated trails, or in any areas with avalanche risk. 		
Birdwatching Drawing/Painting Nature Crafts Nature Observation Photography Orienteering Wildlife Observation Yoga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional certification required at this time. • If combined with another activity requiring certifications, then defer to the highest level of appropriate requirements. 	<i>No Certifying body is currently recognized.</i>

Instructing Safety / Rescue Training Courses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to the Avalanche Canada (AC) Guidelines for Instruction in Avalanche Terrain (GIAT). • Includes instruction in terrain with an Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale (ATES) Class 1 through 4 rating with appropriate AC and ACMG certifications. • Includes apprentice guides operating within their scope of practice and with appropriate supervision. 		
Avalanche Skills Training (AST) 1 Companion Rescue and Managing Avalanche Terrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Avalanche Educator (ATES Class 1 only) • Advanced Avalanche Educator (ATES Class 1-2) • ACMG Mountain Guide (ATES Class 1-4) • ACMG Ski Guide (ATES Class 1-4) • ACMG Alpine Guide (ATES Class 1-4) • or equivalent certification 	<i>Avalanche Canada (AC)</i> <i>Canadian Avalanche Association (CAA)</i> <i>Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG)</i>
Avalanche Skills Training (AST) 2 Companion Rescue and Managing Avalanche Terrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Avalanche Educator (ATES Class 1-2) • ACMG Mountain Guide (ATES Class 1-4) • ACMG Ski Guide (ATES Class 1-4) • ACMG Alpine Guide (ATES Class 1-4) • or equivalent certification 	
AC Avalanche Search and Rescue 1-2 AC Operations Level 1-3 Specialized Avalanche Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avalanche Canada avalanche Professional or equivalent certification. 	
Rope Rescue Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue Canada Instructor • ACMG Mountain Guide • ACMG Alpine Guide • ACMG Rock Guide or equivalent certification 	<i>Rescue Canada</i> <i>Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG)</i>

Unlisted Activities:

If certain activities are not listed, the certification requirements and/or appropriateness of the activity will be assessed at the time of application on a case-by-case basis. Examples include:

- Canyoneering
- Kite Surfing and Kite Boarding
- Via Ferrata
- Adaptive and Mobility activities (such as cycling)
- Para-Gliding
- Archery and Target Shooting

Appendix II: Glossary:

Backcountry: An area within Parks that is outside of formally established facility area. Facility areas are developed locations, including infrastructure improvements, landscaped locations, campsites, picnic locations, playgrounds, piers, highways, parking lots, and adjoining pathways with maintained surfacing such as asphalt or compacted granular. Backcountry areas are characterized by trail development which utilizes natural surfacing, adapts to natural features, and a minimum amount of signage. Backcountry areas are generally not accessible to on-highway motor vehicles.

Designated Trail: A travel-way which is purposefully designed and used for one or more recreation activities that is approved by the land manager, mapped, marked and actively managed and maintained.

Route: A travel-way that is not typically formalized, and which has variable, intermittent or undefined track. navigation skills and route-finding experience is usually required. Routes are typically not approved or maintained by the land manager. However, the the use of routes may be allowed or permitted.

ATES: Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale: The ATES is a scale developed to help persons recreating in mountainous terrain make better evaluations of the risks that are inherent with travelling in avalanche terrain. The scale consists of the following ratings:

Terrain Rating	Class	Description for Backcountry travel
Non-Avalanche	0	No known exposure to avalanches. Very low-angle or densely forested slopes located well away from avalanche paths, or designated trails/routes with no exposure to avalanches.
Simple	1	Exposure to low-angle or primarily forested terrain. Some forest openings may involve the runout zones of infrequent avalanches and terrain traps may exist. Many options to reduce or eliminate exposure.
Challenging	2	Exposure to well-defined avalanche paths, starting zones, terrain traps or overhead hazard. With careful route finding, some options will exist to reduce or eliminate exposure.
Complex	3	Exposure to multiple overlapping avalanche paths or large expanses of steep, open terrain. Frequent exposure to overhead hazard. Many avalanche starting zones and terrain traps with minimal options to reduce exposure.
Extreme	4	Exposure to very steep faces with cliffs, spines, couloirs, crevasses or sustained overhead hazard. No options to reduce exposure; even small avalanches can be fatal.

Note: in areas that have not been mapped or designated with an ATES classification, Alberta Parks staff with the support and advice of avalanche professionals will work with the permit applicant to determine the appropriate approximate terrain rating. In areas of low or moderately sloped or flat terrain outside of mountainous areas, the terrain is considered to be non-avalanche terrain.

Terrain Class:

The most commonly used terrain classification system for walks, hikes and climbing is the Yosemite Decimal System (YDS). A summarized classification system based off the YDS is adapted for use by Alberta Parks within this document:

Terrain Class	Class	Description	Terrain	Hazard
Class 1- Simple Hiking	1	Easy hike or a walk.	Generally a maintained or dedicated trail. Relatively flat with simple terrain, and footing is generally firm.	Very little chance of injury due to terrain considerations.
Class 2- Mod-Difficult Hiking	2	Moderate to difficult hikes	May include moderate or steep slopes. Footing may be loose at times. Wide range of hiking that may or may not be on a designated trail and may include some exposure.	Moderate chance of minor injury. Very little chance of injury or fatality due to terrain considerations.
Class 3- Mod Scramble	3	Moderate Scramble	Steep slopes with regular use of hands for holds or balance. Footing is often loose (ie. talus or scree slopes), and route finding is required to navigate to an objective.	Falls may result in serious injury or fatality. Safety ropes may be used to mitigate risks.
Class 4- Simple Climbing	4	Easy climbing or difficult scramble.	Climbing terrain with abundant holds and natural protections. Handholds and footholds are routinely required for upward or downward progress.	Falls may result in serious injury or fatality. Safety ropes are generally required.
Class 5- Technical Climbing	5	Technical rock climbing and mountaineering terrain.	Rock climbing that involves use of ropes and belaying. Vertical or near vertical walls.	Falls would almost always result in serious injury or fatality if safety measures (ie. ropes/belaying) were not in place.