

Options for Foreign Guides to Work in the United States

American Mountain Guides Association

1. **Certified Guides Co-op – International Guide Protocol:** The Certified Guides Cooperative (CGC) is open to all AMGA and IFMGA certified mountain guides. Foreign IFMGA guides may become member-owners of the CGC in the same manner as US guides. Once an eligible guide purchases a share of the CGC, he or she may utilize all permits and liability insurance held by the CGC. Once the CGC becomes fully operational (1st Quarter 2011), assistance with the US visa application process will be possible. The CGC is investigating a program to expedite the visa process by hosting foreign IFMGA guides. The CGC is also actively reviewing the pricing structure for international guides, and rates will be published by late November, 2010. Please see below for the steps to becoming a CGC member and guiding on CGC permits:
 - a. Eligible guide purchases a share and becomes a member-owner of the CGC. Initial offering is US\$1,000.
 - b. Prior to working in the US, the guide will need to obtain a valid US work visa.
 - c. Prior to working in the US, the guide will need to participate in a Leave-No-Trace (LNT) Trainer Course.
 - d. Prior to working in the US, a current Wilderness First Responder (WFR), or equivalency, along with a current CPR certification will need to be submitted to the CGC office.
 - e. For each trip guided, the guide will complete a user-day form on the CGC website.
 - f. Upon trip completion, the guide will complete a post-use form on the CGC website.
 - g. Please visit the CGC website for the most up-to-date information regarding the CGC and international membership: www.cgcoop.org
2. **Commercial Use Authorizations, Permits and Single-Use Permits for Independent Businesses :** To apply for a permit in the United States without using the Visiting Guide Program or the Certified Guides Cooperative requires the following steps be taken:
 - a. **Apply for Work Visa**
 - b. **Apply for Business license LLC**

- c. **Apply for permits (NPS, USFS, BLM, Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Lands)** Please note that in order to gain access to American Public Lands via the National Park Service (NPS), United States Forest Service (USFS), Department of Fish and Wildlife (DOFW), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and all State Parks it is mandatory for all AMGA/IFMGA Guides to complete the following permit application steps no matter the nationality:
- i. In addition to requested application form you will need to submit qualifications roster of individuals guiding in the Park. Include a copy of AMGA certifications. If IFMGA certified, provide a copy of the lead guide's Carnet.
 - ii. Guide(s) must provide documentation evidencing that they have participated in "Leave No Trace Training".
 - iii. Copy of Wilderness First Responder certification for the lead guide(s) or equivalent emergency medical certifications will need to be presented to the park as part of the single trip guide application evaluation process.
 - iv. Current Certificate of General Liability Insurance required.
 1. The CUA or permit operator is required to maintain General Liability insurance naming the United States of America (National Park Service, Park Name and Address) as an additional insured at no less than the coverage amounts required by Park. Auto Liability insurance may also be required if applicable.
 2. The CUA or permit operator will provide copies of certificates of insurance to the Park as part of the application process with the required endorsement listing the United States of America (as noted above) as an additional insured.
 - v. Workers compensation coverage must be provided to eligible workers as required and described by State law.
 - vi. Coverage provided by insurance companies must meet the following minimum requirements:
 1. All insurers for all coverages must be rated no lower than A- by the most recent edition of Best's Key Rating Guide (Property-Casualty edition).

2. All insurers for all coverages must have a Best's Financial Size Category of at least VIII according to the most recent edition of Best's Key Rating Guide (Property-Casualty edition).
 - vii. Business License: All guides and guiding entities must be licensed to conduct business within the United States. A copy of the lead guide's business license must be included with the application.
 - viii. The CUA or permit holder is encouraged to comply with the guidelines of the US Public Health Service for Food, Potable Water, Human Waste, Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases, and Illness Reporting in backcountry operations (www.nps.gov/public_health/index.htm, click on "State Health Departments" on left column).
 - ix. Provide a copy of Visitor's Acknowledgement of Risks Form - If the Applicant uses an Acknowledgement of Risk Form, the language must follow the NPS Acknowledgement of Risk format. A waiver of liability statement, insurance disclaimer, and/or indemnification agreement may not be used.
 - x. Pay applicable fees required by Land Managers
3. **Visiting Guide Program:** Working with participating Guide Services Foreign Guides can work on American Public Lands by becoming an employee of the permit holder or concessioner at the time of their trip. The options for working through the Visiting Guide Program are as follows:
 - a. A foreign guide is hired as an employee and works under the participating Guide Service's Lead Guide
 - b. A foreign guide is hired as an employee of participating Guide Service and leads private trip without working under Guide Service's Lead Guide.
 - c. A foreign guide is allowed to join a guided trip or expedition led by participating Guide Service's Lead Guide in a "Liaison Guide" capacity. The level of responsibility granted to the foreign guide would be determined by the participating Guide Service's Management. Consideration would be given to what relevant guiding experience the foreign guide have; what level of training does the guide have (i.e The NPS contract requires guides to have WFR or equivalent medical training, LNT training and when applicable to the terrain Level II Avalanche training.)