

Guidelines for tour operators

The joint centres for combating work-related crime in Troms and Finnmark are part of a nationwide network of eight centres working to prevent and address issues related to employment and workplace safety. These centres consist of employees from various government agencies, including the Norwegian Tax Administration, Labour Inspection Authority, Labour and Welfare Administration and the Police. As part of a joint Northern Norway tourism initiative, the centres in Troms and Finnmark, along with Nordland, announced an increased

focus on adventure tourism. Inspections have identified instances of non-compliance and regulatory violations among several businesses, underscoring the ongoing need for guidance to ensure compliance with legal standards. Each of these agencies enforces strict laws and regulations that must be adhered to – they are mandatory. These guidelines are designed to provide clear information and practical measures to support tour operators and guides in complying with Norwegian law.

Laws and regulations

The Norwegian Tax Administration

As a business owner, remember that you are required to 1) register your business with the Brønnøysund Register Center, 2) submit a tax return with business specifications every year (tax return exemption does not apply to business owners), 3) pay advance tax (if you are a sole proprietorship), and 4) keep track of your accounts and receipts (if you do not have accounting expertise yourself, we recommend using an accountant). Remember value added tax (VAT); passenger transport is subject to VAT, currently 12%. The same rate applies to accommodation services, if applicable. Sales of food and drinks are currently subject to 15% VAT. Guided tour services are exempt from VAT. Registration in the VAT register is mandatory when taxable turnover exceeds NOK 50,000 over a twelve-month period. Only purchases for use in the taxable business are eligible for deduction. Purchases for guided tour services are not eligible for VAT deduction.

For more information visit, www.skatteetaten.no

The Norwegian Public Roads Administration

The Norwegian Public Roads Administration works continuously to improve road safety for all road users and has a zero vision for serious injuries or fatalities in traffic. They check, among other things, the technical condition of vehicles, licenses, driving and rest times, and driver competence. In the event of a breach of the regulations, the Norwegian Public Roads Administration can impose a ban on use, levy a fine, and report the matter to the police.

For more information, visit www.statensvegvesen.no

Troms County

The County Authority is responsible for issuing and overseeing all permits for professional drivers. The permit holder must have a valid licence and must at all times meet the requirements for holding the permit (ref. Professional Transport Act §2). Drivers who do not operate regular taxi services must hold a valid exemption from the requirements for a taximeter, taxi sign, and affiliation with a dispatch centre. The exemption is granted for three years at a time and is valid only within the county in which it is issued. The vehicle must be registered as a taxi in the vehicle register, insured accordingly, and have a valid annual EU roadworthiness test (ref. Professional Transport Act §48). The licensing authority may revoke the permit in the event of violations of the Act or its regulations (ref. Professional Transport Act §16).

For more information, visit www.tromsfoylke.no

The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority

The Labour Inspection Authority supervises businesses to ensure that they comply with working environment regulations, so that employees have a safe and secure workplace. Employees who work in Norway must have employment contracts, pay slips, regulated working hours and safe working environment (HSE). If the inspection reveals that the company is in breach of the regulations in one or more areas, the Labour Inspection Authority may take various measures; order to rectify the situation, penalty fee, or report to the police. The response depends on the severity of the violation and whether it poses an immediate danger to employees.

For more information visit, www.arbeidstilsynet.no

Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration

If you, your employees, or your business receive support from National Insurance Administration (Nav), it is important to comply with the requirements that apply to the individual benefit scheme. Some benefits from Nav can be combined with work, in which case the number of working hours or income must be reported to Nav. Employers are required to report employment information to the Employer and Employee Register (Aa-register). As an employer, you must report this information at least once a month through the A-scheme at www.skatteetaten.no, where you will also find further details about the scheme.

For more information, visit www.nav.no

Police

Controls are based on several laws and regulations, such as the Road Traffic Act, the Professional Transport Act, and the Immigration Act, with a particular focus on the legality of residence, employment, and licenses. Inspections are often carried out in collaboration with other agencies such as the Labour Inspection Authority, the Tax Administration, and Labor and Welfare Administration, especially during the northern lights tourism season. The police can report violations of commercial transport regulations, while the Norwegian Public Roads Administration can impose fines. Illegal employment can lead to expulsion or deportation from Norway, often with an entry ban of up to two years.

For more information, visit www.politiet.no

Local customs and considerations



Road safety

- **Follow the *Road Traffic Act*,** and local laws and regulations.
- **Drive carefully** and adjust your speed according to weather and road conditions, darkness, and the presence of wildlife.
- **Always adjust your speed** to suit the environment, visibility, and local conditions, helping to prevent accidents and avoid causing danger or disturbance to others.
- **Adhere to speed limits**, maintain full control over the vehicle, and only undertake safe overtaking maneuvers.
- **Remove snow** from the roof and keep all windows clear.
- **Let locals pass** instead of increasing the speed.
- **Keep vehicles on the right side** of the road, stop at designated areas only, and give way to pedestrians and other traffic.
- **All drivers** must ensure they have a course in winter driving.
- **Ensure staff and guests** wear reflective vest during roadside activity.
- **Private road owners** may prohibit motor vehicle traffic and are entitled to prohibit cars or other vehicles from using private roads.

Campfire regulations

- **Choose safe locations:** Never make fires directly on the ground, on roads or parking areas. Even in winter, a fire can burn through the snow and can reach the ground, leaving ugly scorch marks. Stay away from cabins, piers, other infrastructure and cars.
- **Use designated fire pits:** If none are available, use a fire bowl or similar equipment to protect the surrounding soil and vegetation.
- **Seasonal ban on campfires:** From April 15th to September 15th, fires are only allowed in established fire pits due to high fire risk.
- **Respect nature:** Do not cut or collect live or dead wood. Buy local firewood instead.
- **Extinguish completely:** Burn wood to white ash, soak with water or snow, and, if possible, take it home and dispose of it safely in a bin when there's no risk of fire, smoke, or smell.
- **Clean up:** Take all remains, wood, charcoal, and litter (yours and others') with you. Remains from campfires may harm car tires and snow removal equipment.
- **Tip!** Keep it small – use wood no thicker than a wrist. It will burn with good flames and quickly turn into white ash if you need to leave camp in a hurry.

These guidelines have been developed based on feedback from local residents, tour operators, local guides, public authorities, destination organizations, and research institutions. As guides and operators, welcome visitors while fostering respect for our people, places, and ways of life.

Encourage awareness and care in every interaction to protect local culture and community values. We strongly recommend implementing these guidelines as the essential minimum to protect our community and vulnerable environment. They outline the minimum standards for the safe, responsible, and respectful operation of tour vehicles.

Parking & stopping

- **Respect bus stops and rest areas** by avoiding unnecessary stopping or parking. Use only designated or permitted parking areas, and ensure parking is considerate, does not block access, and complies with local regulations.
- **The use of hazard warning lights do not** permit stopping for photos. Only stop where it's safe and legal.
- **Do not park on private property.**
- **Do not park or stop on the road**, or on the roadside – not even when the parking spaces are not plowed for snow.
- **Collaborate with other vehicles** (busses or vans) to allow parking together in the same location.
- **Always be respectful and professional** towards other operators and their guests.

Responsible conduct

- **Leave no trace;** keep nature as you found it. Plan ahead and prepare to avoid causing unintended negative impact to the environment. Always take trash, wet wipes etc. with you.
- **Inform your guests about restrictions for flying with drones** and the importance of familiarizing themselves with the regulations before operating a drone. Illegal drone use may result in fines and confiscation of the drone.
- **Be mindful that you are visiting small and vulnerable communities** where both the environment and local ways of life can be easily affected by tourism.
- **Bring a toilet-tent and a toilet** to pack out toilet waste with you and keep the local nature pristine. Rural areas are not meant to be your guests' toilet. Locals react strongly to this practice.
- **Teach your guests about good behavior practices** and encourage them not to take pictures inside private homes or of children and locals without permission.
- **Always keep noise levels to a minimum**, especially after 23:00 in residential areas.
- **As some areas are far from help**, we recommend that you always carry sufficient safety equipment for all your guests. This may include hot water, snacks and thermal blankets.
- **Motorised traffic in outlying fields** and waterways is generally prohibited.
- **Do not feed the reindeers.**

Thank you! By following and enforcing these guidelines you help keep our community safe, proud and thriving.

These guidelines have been developed as informative and preventive measures through a collaboration between the joint centres for combating work-related crime in Troms and Finnmark, and the five municipalities which constitute the Tromsø region; Lyngen, Balsfjord, Tromsø, Storfjord, and Karlsøy municipality as part of the Tromsø region project "Tromsøregionen mot 2050". Troms County has supported the project through the Arctic 2030 program.