

WELCOME TO NCOAE ALASKA! ALASKA — TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

Your course will begin when we meet inside the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. Located 5 miles southwest of downtown Anchorage, the airport is named in honor of Ted Stevens, former U.S. Senator from Alaska, and is surrounded by Cook Inlet and six, snow-capped mountain ranges.

The information below will help you organize your travel arrangements to and from your course. Begin your preparations as soon as possible, as it can weeks or even months to obtain your passport, vaccinations, and secure your travel arrangements.

We recommend that you spend some time researching the geography, history, politics, culture, heritage, and languages of Alaska. For the most current information on Alaska, you might want to view the Alaska State Visitor website:

<http://alaska.gov/visitorHome.html>

ITINERARY — Expedition travel requires some degree of itinerary flexibility due to unforeseen events and adverse conditions. Below is the intended beginning and ending itinerary for this course, subject to change as needed to account for unexpected events.

THE FIRST DAY — After a midday airport pickup, we'll drive to Eklutna Lake Campground where we'll check, distribute, and repack gear, eat a tasty meal, and share the final details about your course. We will be home-basing at a remote location in the Wrangell St. Elias National Park, reached by backpacking or bush-flights.

THE LAST DAY — The day before we return home, we will recuperate, reorganize, and rest at Eklutna. This is where we will de-issue and clean gear and complete post-course formalities. From there, we will rise early and return to the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport where your journey home will begin.

► LOGISTICAL INFORMATION:

WHERE: We will all meet indoors at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, at baggage claim #1, on the east end of level 1. The airport code is ANC. Your return airport will also be ANC.

WHEN: Plan to arrive at ANC between 9am and noon (local time in Anchorage) on the first day of the course, and plan to depart ANC no sooner than 6pm on the day your course ends. You can view the maps of ANC at

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/anc/travelerInfo/terminalMaps.shtml>

All Travel Arrangements for NCOAE International programs are managed and facilitated by NCOAE's trusted travel agency professionals, Travel Associates. Travel Associates is a bespoke travel agency staffed by MaryJo Palmer and Heidi Cunningham, both seasoned Travel Advisors with years of experience behind them. MaryJo and Heidi are based in Woodstock, VT but assist with customers based around the world. While Travel Associates specialty is luxury travel, they are highly skilled at complex itineraries and can provide guidance on everything from upgrades to Visas to Travel Insurance. Upon enrolling in an NCOAE program, you will need to contact MaryJo or Heidi either 800-640-4137 or 802-332-3511, or by email at maryjo.palmer@travelassociates.us and heidi.cunningham@travelassociates.us to secure your travel arrangements.

► IF DELAYED:

If it becomes evident that you will not arrive in Anchorage on time, contact NCOAE at (910) 399-8090 immediately.

PASSPORTS & VISAS: For ease of travel, citizens of all countries should have 2 forms of government issued identification, Foreign nationals should assure one of these documents is a valid passport with them at all times for the duration of the time you are in Alaska. Foreign nationals should learn the requirements for entry and travel within the United States at [https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/572/~/entering-the-u.s---documents-required-for-foreign-nationals-\(international](https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/572/~/entering-the-u.s---documents-required-for-foreign-nationals-(international).

► OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:

There is no official language in the United States. However, as of October 2014, 31 out of 50 states have established English as their official language. English is spoken in all cities and businesses except for some Native Alaskan areas. There are 19 indigenous languages spoken within the boundaries of the state of Alaska. Alaska provides voting information in Iñupiaq, Central Yup'ik, Gwich'in, Siberian Yupik, Koyukon, and Tagalog, as well as English. Alaska recognizes many of their Native languages as official.

► OFFICIAL CURRENCY, AND MONEY CONCERNS:

Contact your bank card and credit card security departments and let them know when and where you'll be traveling. Otherwise, you risk having them cancel your cards while you're traveling.

The United States dollar is the official currency of Alaska. To find the current exchange rate from other countries, visit x-rates.com, xe.com, or visit your favorite currency exchange website.

An effective way to access cash when in Anchorage is through the automatic cash machines (ATMs). Cash advance machines are increasingly common, and often have the best exchange rate. If you bring money in travelers' checks keep a record of when you exchange them in a separate location from the checks themselves. You cannot reclaim Travelers' Checks unless you know which numbers you have spent. Visa and MasterCard are accepted throughout the United States, with the rare exception of some merchants who only accept cash.

► PERSONAL EXPENSES:

Once your course is in the field, there will be little opportunity to spend money. Former students have recommended bringing a debit or credit card and a relatively small amount of travel money (20 to 100 dollars in small bills) for the drive to and from your course area. Once your course has begun, there won't be an opportunity for you to change money – make sure you take care of this prior to the start day. Your personal expenses, pre- and post-course, depend entirely on your style of travel.

During your course - from the time we leave Anchorage until the afternoon of the final day of the course – NCOAE will cover the cost of food, transportation to ANC airport, and instruction, as well as the group equipment indicated on the equipment list. You are responsible for any cost of lodging on the nights before the course start date, and any personal expenses you incur. **You are also responsible for personal medical bills, and evacuation expenses if you need to be evacuated from the field, and for bringing personal equipment listed as *not available* on the course equipment list.**

► HEALTH CONCERNS:

Hospital visits and prescriptions can be expensive. It is critical that you visit your doctor well in advance of your course to answer your questions and make specific recommendations for you. The best time to see the doctor is at least 4-6 weeks before your course. Advice on finding a Travel Health Specialist (if you prefer) is available on The Center for Disease Control website for traveler's health <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/see-doctor>

You must see a doctor and have all appropriate vaccinations that are recommended for you for the areas we'll be visiting to be allowed to participate in your NCOAE course.

Vaccinations should be recorded in the official document "International Certificate of Vaccination" available from the U.S. Public Health Service or its equivalent in other countries, or from your doctor. This is also a good place to record your prescriptions, eyeglass needs, medical problems such as allergies, and any other information of a medical nature. Please record your blood type on the front page of this booklet.

ROUTINE IMMUNIZATIONS — It is advised that all international travelers have their routine immunizations up to date.

These include:

- ***Tetanus and diphtheria toxins:*** You must have a current tetanus immunization for your course.
- ***Measles, Mumps and Rubella:*** Persons born after 1956 should have a documented history of immunization.

The CDC and NCOAE provide general vaccination recommendations, but only your travel health doctor can give you specific advice that takes your personal factors into consideration. Recommendations for vaccines and medicines depend on many factors that are specific to each person. Be sure to give your doctor all needed information honestly and accurately so they can make appropriate recommendations.

Examples of these factors include:

- Where you are traveling
- The length of your NCOAE trip
- The types of activities you might do
- Other personal matters such as your age, your personal medical and vaccination history, and current medical condition

Follow the advice of your doctor by getting all the shots and medicines that are recommended for you.

DO NOT PET STRAY ANIMALS

We will be in remote areas where immediate medical attention is often many days away.

Echinococcosis or hydatidosis disease results from being infected with the larvae of the tapeworm *Echinococcus Granulosus* and is found most commonly in dogs that consume the viscera of infected sheep. Infection results in the formation of cysts in the liver, lungs, kidney and spleen. This condition is also known as cystic hydatid disease and can usually be successfully treated with surgery. In some cases it can be fatal.

Humans are usually exposed to these eggs in one of two ways:

1. By directly ingesting food items or drinking water that is contaminated with stool from an infected animal.
2. By petting or having other contact with cats and dogs that are infected. These pets may shed the eggs in their stool, and their fur may be contaminated. They may also contaminate other objects, such as harnesses or leashes, which can also spread infection.

Three steps can help prevent echinococcosis and other diseases as well:

1. After handling pets, always wash your hands with soap and warm water.
2. Do not eat wild fruits or vegetables picked directly from the ground without careful washing or cooking.
3. Treat or boil all non-tap water.

MEDICINES — You must bring a supply of all prescription and non-prescription medications that you take on a regular basis along with you on your NCOAE course. Your supply should include enough quantity to last for two to three weeks beyond the end date of your NCOAE trip. Check the **Transportation Security Administration** (<https://www.tsa.gov>) website for updates on permitted and prohibited items, including medicines that you are allowed to carry onto an airplane.

► **INSURANCE:**

TRAVEL INSURANCE — NCOAE requires all trip participants purchase Travel Insurance that includes coverage for medical evacuation, repatriation and medical expenses for the duration of their NCOAE course. Trip Cancellation Insurance is strongly recommended as well.

Travel and mountaineering programs are true “adventure travel”, as such the unexpected may occur.

We recognize that deciding on the right insurance policy can become confusing, so we’ve created this listed to assist you in understanding a few options for this type of insurance. We are not insurance professionals, therefore recommend you address specific questions with your insurance agent and thoroughly understand any policy you purchase.

The following companies provide options for travel insurance:

- 1. RIPCORDER** – Offers comprehensive travel insurance coverage for all Mountaineering & Trekking programs.
- 2. TRAVEL GUARD** – Includes Adventure Sports coverage for Mountaineering.

HEALTH INSURANCE — Many health insurance plans do not cover problems you may incur abroad. Contact your health insurance company to learn if you are 100% covered while traveling to your course destination. If not, check with the travel insurance companies above to learn about their gap coverages for medical care and medical evacuation.

► **INSECT-BORNE DISEASES:**

See <http://www.alaskacenters.gov/pests.cfm>

► **BAGGAGE AND EQUIPMENT:**

Please check directly with the airline for baggage limitations and allowances. If any checked luggage does not arrive, please file a claim for lost luggage at the airport where it did not arrive. You can use the claim number to help track the luggage.

► **TELEPHONE SERVICE:**

The USA has reliable phone service, though remote areas may have no service. **PHONE CALLS MAY NOT BE MADE WHILE ON COURSE.** Any calls must be made on “in-town,” off-course days, such as when you are in the airport before and after the course. ***Once the course leaves for the field, you will not be able to make or receive any phone calls until the end of the course.***

► **PRE- AND POST-COURSE TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Alaskan customs and social impact will be discussed specifically during the course, but the following guidelines will get you started with being sensitive to traveling in a different cultures. The USA is generally regarded as a safe country in which to travel, but there are thieves and con men worldwide. Avoid traveling alone at night.

► **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The US Legal System is a complex organization of Federal and State governmental divisions whose laws and regulations are based on federal and state constitutions. Penalties for breaking laws can be severe. However, even if you run afoul of the laws, you are considered “innocent until proven guilty” in the United States. In order to understand the US Legal System, you should first know which laws, rules or regulations control.

The U.S. Constitution is the highest law of the land. Federal Laws enacted by the US Congress come next. Additionally, each State has a legislature that adopts state laws called “statutes”.

The bottom line is, act appropriately and do not do anything, which might be construed as illegal. When in doubt, ask. You are a visitor to Alaska, and guests of its peoples and are expected to act appropriately in that role.

You are a representative of your home country, and of NCOAE. As such, we expect you to be an upstanding representative.

► **STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?**

Call NCOAE at (910) 399-8090



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