

# AECO Marketing Guidelines



Photo: © Troels Jacobsen

## Marketing Guidelines

The Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) recognize the power of marketing and the effect it has on sales. The Arctic is an amazing region and marketing of this destination will include photographs of breathtaking nature and impressive wildlife, as well as people and cultures. However, photographs and text may be interpreted differently by different audiences, and marketing materials can also have unintended effects. Distances can be misjudged, and situations misinterpreted. The use of zoom lenses and text promising close encounters with wildlife may lead to the impression that operators are engaging in activities that are not in compliance with regulations and AECO guidelines. It can also give the impression that the industry is pushing limits to deliver the best possible experiences.

Tourism marketing material are routinely monitored by authorities and others whose role is to manage tourism and limit

risks related to safety, environment, and community impact. Websites, brochures, social media, press releases, films, videos, blogs, travel posts, logbooks, and other channels are subject to constant scrutiny by authorities, as well as the general public. Marketing personnel may be less experienced with the Arctic and not as familiar with existing regulations, or AECO's guidelines and standards. The objective of these Marketing Guidelines is to help companies and their marketing personnel in their efforts to promote the Arctic in a way that reflects responsible practices and compliance with regulations and AECO guidelines and values. By accurately representing tourism activities in the Arctic, marketing staff can help manage guest expectations, which is helpful for field staff who are responsible for enforcing guidelines. Responsible marketing also affirms the industry's commitment to responsible, environmentally friendly, and safe expedition cruise tourism in the Arctic.

# Guidelines

## Be mindful of AECO standards

Within the AECO geographical area, AECO members have agreed to operate in accordance with certain standards:

- AECO Guidelines must be followed at all time.
- The non-disturbance principle, including not disturbing wildlife on land or at sea.
- No more than 100 visitors in the same general area at any one time outside of towns and settlements.
- Guests should generally not be in groups of more than 30 persons.
- There needs to be at least one accompanying staff member per 20 guests ashore.

## Words matter

When promoting the Arctic, it is recommended to use language that promotes the beauty and diversity of the Arctic nature, culture and people, the exploratory and sometimes unexpected nature of Arctic expedition cruising, and the educational activities being offered.

Feel free to use language that promotes the unique qualities of the Arctic, but please do not use language such as “see it before it is gone”.

Keep in mind that itineraries and plans may change. Highlighting special qualities of particular places may be tantalizing, but please limit the mentioning of site-specific locations in marketing materials, particularly with regards to known sensitive and popular nature landing sites. To avoid pressure on landing sites and ensure realistic guest expectations, make sure to state that itineraries can change on short notice due to weather, ice, and nature conditions, and for operational reasons.



The AECO geographical area is comprised of the Canadian Arctic (Northwest Territories and Nunavut), Greenland, Iceland, Svalbard and Jan Mayen, and the National Park Russian Arctic (Franz Josef Land and parts of Novaya Zemlya).





Photo: © Troels Jacobsen

## A picture is worth a thousand words

Images and film are a powerful way to convey the splendor of the Arctic but can be easily be taken out of context by the public, media and authorities who regulate tourism activities.

- Consider how close-up photographs of wildlife may be perceived. Authorities may demand removal of “inappropriate” use of photographs in marketing material.
- Be mindful of images potentially showing trampling of sensitive vegetation. In some countries it is a criminal offense to disturb sensitive vegetation. AECO has guidelines on this.
- Be conscious of images depicting people too close to sensitive cultural remains. Disturbance of cultural heritage remains, and artifacts may be a criminal offense. AECO has guidelines on this.
- Please ensure that the distance between wildlife and guests, staff, tender boats, ships reflect AECO Guidelines.
- Use of zoom lenses may influence the perception of distances. Please ensure that people or vessels and small boats do not appear on or too close to glaciers, icebergs, or wildlife. If possible, mention lens focal length in image caption if in doubt. Distances depicted should reflect AECO Guidelines.
- Please ensure that firearms and other types of safety equipment are depicted in a way that reflects best practices for all aspects of your operations.
- Even if the animals have approached, be very conscious of using images of wildlife very close to Zodiacs/small boats, people ashore and similar. Avoid using pictures of polar bears touching vessels or e.g., sticking their heads through port holes. Avoid using images of swimming polar bears. In some countries it is a criminal offense to follow a swimming polar bear.
- If using photos of clearly identifiable persons, be mindful about privacy laws applicable in your jurisdiction. Be considerate of the privacy of the people that are depicted in the photos. Be especially mindful about photos depicting children and minors, and keep in mind that parental consent is generally required when using such images.



Photo: © Lisa Strøm





Some Arctic wildlife such as polar bear, walrus, Arctic fox, and reindeer will sometimes choose to approach ships or people out of curiosity. If a photograph or video depicts this behavior, it is recommended to use supporting text to explain that the animal has chosen to move closer to the people/vessel/vehicle being shown.

Photo: © Troels Jacobsen

## Marketing matters

When working with travel agents or other tour operators and wholesalers who book trips, please ensure they are aware of the recommendations in these guidelines for their own marketing and public relations.

These recommendations apply to all marketing and public relations, including brochures, social media, press releases, film/video, blogs, travel posts, logbooks, etc. All companies are recommended to have a Social Media Policy in place to ensure all staff have clear guidelines on what they are permitted to post about operations, and what guidelines apply for use of photos and videos.

We recommend that the company's AECO representative reviews marketing material before it is published. If in doubt, always consult with company experts, such as field staff or other personnel who have clear understanding and familiarity with regulations and AECO standards. Thank you for helping ensure that marketing materials support and reflect AECO's objectives to ensure considerate, sustainable, and safe Arctic tourism.

Photo: © Mads Pihl, Visit Greenland

