



Operating Procedures – Golden Circle Tour (Example)

Scope and purpose

This document is an example of operating procedures for guided Golden Circle tours. It is intended as a model and reference only, and must be adapted by operators to reflect their specific activities, routes, group size, equipment, and seasonal conditions.

The purpose of these operating procedures is to support safe, consistent, and professional delivery of tours by setting out minimum requirements for equipment, guide competence, pre-tour briefings, conduct during the tour, and review procedures.

Route characteristics

- High traffic volume (private cars, buses, mixed traffic conditions)
- Popular and often crowded sites (Þingvellir, Geysir, Gullfoss)
- Frequent entry and exit from vehicles
- Variable walking surfaces: paved paths, gravel, uneven terrain, stairs
- Rapidly changing weather, including wind, rain, ice, and snow

Required equipment (guide)

- Fully charged mobile phone with emergency numbers saved
- First aid kit suitable for day tours (bandages, disinfectant, gloves, pain relief, blister care)
- High-visibility vest or jacket (for roadside stops and parking areas)
- Contingency plan accessible during the tour
- Weather-appropriate clothing and footwear

Knowledge and competence of guides

- Familiarity with the Golden Circle route and all standard stops
- Knowledge of site-specific risks (traffic, cliffs, hot springs, slippery paths)
- Training and experience as a guide and group leader
- Valid first-aid certificate from a recognised provider
- Ability to adapt the itinerary due to weather, road conditions, or safety concerns

Before departure

- Review weather forecast, road conditions, and site alerts

- Confirm group size complies with company limits
- Inspect vehicle safety and accessibility (seatbelts, steps, cleanliness)
- Ensure emergency equipment is present and accessible

At the start of the tour

- Introduce the guide and outline the day's itinerary and approximate timings
- Explain safety rules, including staying with the group, safe behaviour near traffic, respecting barriers and warning signs, and hazards related to geothermal areas
- Provide practical information on toilet stops, walking distances, surface conditions, and weather considerations
- Ask about reduced mobility, visual or hearing impairments, and medical conditions relevant to the tour

During the tour

- Maintain group control at all stops and during walks
- Position the group safely away from traffic when stopping or disembarking
- Conduct head-counts after stops and before departure
- Monitor weather and surface conditions continuously
- Adjust walking routes or cancel stops if conditions become unsafe

Particular attention points

- Parking areas and roadside stops: moving vehicles, reversing buses
- Slippery surfaces during winter: ice, snow, slush, wet steps
- In winter conditions, the use of ice spikes or other traction devices should be considered. Where appropriate, such equipment should be offered or provided to participants to reduce the risk of slipping
- Cliffs, edges, and viewing platforms, especially in windy conditions
- Crowding and congestion at peak times

In the event of an incident

- Follow the company's contingency plan
- Prioritise first aid and safety of the group
- Contact emergency services when required
- Document the incident according to company procedures

Review and updates

These operating procedures should be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary, for example if incidents or near-misses occur, route conditions change, new risks are identified, or legal or regulatory requirements are updated.

Disclaimer

This document is an example of operating procedures and is provided for guidance purposes only. It does not replace the obligation of operators to conduct their own risk assessments or to develop procedures tailored to their specific operations, routes, group size, equipment, and seasonal conditions, in accordance with applicable legislation.