



सत्यमेव जयते

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THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNION TERRITORY OF LADAKH
TOURISM & CULTURE DEPARTMENT
UT SECRETARIAT, LEH, LADAKH
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NOTICE

Subject: Inviting comments/ suggestions from the stakeholders/ public on the draft 'Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024'.

In order to regulate the mountaineering and trekking activities in Ladakh and to make organizers and participants of such activities more responsible and accountable towards the fragile ecosystem of Ladakh, the Department of Tourism, UT of Ladakh has drafted '**Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024**'.

In this connection, it is hereby informed that the Department of Tourism, UT of Ladakh hereby places the draft '**Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024**' in public domain for inviting comments/suggestions from the stakeholders/ public.

Comments/suggestions, if any, are invited within a period of 03 weeks from the date of publication of the notice on the official website of the Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh (ladakh.nic.in) and official websites of Leh District (leh.nic.in) and Kargil District (kargil.nic.in).

The comments/suggestions/objections may be sent by e-mail at ladakhtourism.guidelines@gmail.com or by post to the following address:

Under Secretary/OSD, Tourism and Culture Department, UT Secretariat Ladakh.

Issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.

Sd/-
(Vikram Singh Malik) IAS
Secretary,
Tourism and Culture Department,
UT of Ladakh

No.: LA(Trm)(LMP)/UTL/2024(223)/1964-70

Dated: 08.10.2024

Copy to the:

1. Director, Tourism Department, Ladakh for information.
2. Technical Director, NIC, Ladakh for uploading the notice along with the draft copies of the Guidelines on the official website of the Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh and official websites of Leh District and Kargil District.
3. Joint Director, Information & Public Relations Department, UT of Ladakh for wide publicity through electronic, print and social media.
4. OSD to the Hon'ble LG, UT of Ladakh for kind information of the HLG.
5. Private Secretary to Advisor to the Hon'ble LG, Ladakh for kind information of the Advisor.


08.10.24

6. PA to the Secretary, Tourism and Culture Department, UT of Ladakh for kind information of the Secretary.
7. Office File.



Muhammad Ali Tak, 08.10.24
Under Secretary/OSD,
Tourism & Culture Department
UT of Ladakh



Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024

(for sustainable expeditions)

Department of Tourism

I. Background

Ladakh, with its stunning high-altitude peaks, has long captivated adventurers and mountaineers from around the globe. Iconic mountains such as Nun Kun, Kang Yatse, Mentok Kangri and Saser Kangri offer unparalleled challenges and breath-taking vistas, making the region a premier destination for mountaineering enthusiasts. The challenging topography and beautiful landscapes of Ladakh intrigue and motivate climbers globally, by providing an array of mountains to climb which ranges at different altitude levels. The altitude level for mountains specifically for mountain climbers in Ladakh is ranging from 5,000 mt. to 7,800 mt.

As mountaineering gains popularity, it is essential to establish a comprehensive framework that ensures safety, sustainability of mountaineers, and preservation of Ladakh's pristine environment. The Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024 will address the need for standardized regulations, proper training and accreditation for Mountaineering Tour Operators (MTOs), guides, mandatory environmental conservation practices, permits and emergency responses. Through the implementation of this policy, the Department of Tourism, Union Territory of Ladakh aims to promote sportive mountaineering, protect its natural heritage, and enhance the overall experience for both climbers and the local community.

II. Vision

To foster a thriving, sustainable mountaineering activities in the Union Territory of Ladakh that benefits the local communities and preserves the natural environment.

III. Mission

To promote sportive mountaineering activities in Ladakh by engaging the local communities, upskilling the Ladakhi guides, and recognizing the contribution of Mountaineering Tour Operators (MTOs) to ensure environmental preservation and economic growth for the long-term benefit of the region.

IV. Objective

The Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024 aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1. Encourage Sustainable Mountaineering:** Promote mountaineering activities in the Union Territory of Ladakh while ensuring the preservation of region's natural beauty & ecological balance through sustainable practices.
- 2. Recognition of Mountaineering Tour Operators (MTOs):** Professional execution of mountaineering activities through recognized MTOs and involving them in the value chain.
- 3. Economic Elevation:** Leverage mountain tourism to stimulate the local economy by creating job opportunities and supporting the local entrepreneurs like MTOs, guides, porters, accommodation units, equipment rental services, etc.
- 4. Inclusive Community Development:** Extension of direct benefit to the people, especially the ones in remote mountain regions, from mountaineering activities through fair wages, skill development programs and community-based tourism initiatives.
- 5. Enhance Safety and Training:** Establish robust safety standards and training programs for climbers, MTOs & guides to ensure safe mountaineering practices, reducing risks and enhancing the overall experience for the climbers.

V. Registration of Mountaineering Tour Operators (MTOs)

Any entity who intends to operate as a Mountaineering Tour Operator (MTO) in the Union Territory of Ladakh must mandatorily register with the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh fulfilling the following criteria:

S. No.	Criteria	Supporting Documents	Remarks
1.	Applicant's proof of identity	Aadhaar card or any other	Mandatory

		Government of India issued photo identity card	
2.	Applicant must be a resident of the Union Territory of Ladakh	Ladakh Resident Certificate (LRC) issued by the Competent Authority	Mandatory
3.	Business incorporation details	Incorporation certificate (under the Companies Act 1056/2013, the Partnership Act 1932, Partnership Deed or Proprietorship Firm, with GST Registration)	Mandatory
4.	Applicant must own essential equipment commensurate with the needs of undertaking and running mountaineering operations in the Union Territory of Ladakh (listed below)	Self-certification detailing all available equipment with its specifications and quantity	Mandatory
5.	Minimum one technically qualified guide with first aid/ CPR certification by Red Cross, or any other similar course conducted/ recognized by the Government of India or the UT Administration	CV of the guide along with all certifications	Mandatory
6.	Earmarked office space in the Union Territory of Ladakh (not necessarily commercial space), equipped with necessary technology for smooth operations with accessible and clean toilet facility	Office address proof in form of incorporation certificate, utility bill, lease agreement/ rent agreement or ownership documents	Mandatory

VI. Lead Guide & Instructor

Lead guide & instructor who are leading mountaineering activities shall, as a minimum, hold the following experience and valid certificates:

1. A minimum 16-hour (2-day) first aid/ CPR certification by Red Cross, or any other similar course conducted/ recognized by the Government of India or the UT Administration.
2. Completed the mountaineering course, preferably the 'Advanced Method of Instructions' from the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports (JIM&WS) Pahalgam, or any of the national mountaineering institutes, or carry a certificate duly recognized by the UT Administration or a recognized tour operator conducting mountaineering expeditions stating that the individual "has experience of 3 years in assisting mountaineering expeditions at altitudes of 6,000 mt. and minimum 3 climbs above 6,000 mt. clearly reflected in a logbook duly authenticated/ validated by the operator and the clients".
3. Maintain a logbook containing authenticated records of mountaineering experience.
4. All guides to have a comprehensive understanding of altitude sickness, recognizing its symptoms, treatment, and good knowledge is essential of appropriate medication is essential to work at high altitudes.
5. Sound knowledge of cold weather problems like hypothermia/ frostbite.

VII. Essential Equipment

Equipment, especially safety equipment should be of the highest standard available and preferably certified by ISI (Indian Standards Institute) or an international body like CE (Conformité Européenne) or UIAA (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme). Registered MTOs shall have the following necessary equipment in sufficient numbers for organizing mountaineering expeditions:

1. Climbing boots along with covers
2. Ice-axes
3. Windproof suits
4. Down jackets
5. Sleeping bags
6. Carry mats
7. Rucksack
8. Socks
9. Climbing harness
10. Head gear
11. Gloves
12. UV sunglasses
13. Two men tents
14. Safety helmets
15. Woolens - Vests, leggings, pullovers, trousers and shirts
16. Beeper
17. Shovel
18. Descender
19. Other essential items

The correct use and proper maintenance of climbing equipment are essential for conducting mountaineering activities. The MTOs shall produce a self-certification stating the use of quality equipment for mountaineering activities every month during the mountaineering season to the office of the Assistant Director (Tourism), Leh/ Kargil.

1. Rope: There are many different types of ropes. The MTO and leader must have sound knowledge of the specifically designed climbing rope, including the different types and applications. Climbing rope comes in different diameters and specifications but the basics are dynamic, semi-static, and static. A safe working load of 25KN (2.5 tons) and CE approval is the internationally recognized standard for climbing ropes.
2. Hardware (anchors, carabineers, belay devices, etc.): There is a wide range of climbing aids and devices, and the MTO and instructor must have sound knowledge of their applications including which devices are necessary to conduct mountaineering activities safely. These devices are also a “link” in the safety chain. As per all other climbing equipment items, a safe working load of 25KN (2.5 tons) and CE approval is the internationally recognized standard for climbing hardware and devices.
3. All equipment is subject to wear and tear and must be checked before every use. Incorrect storage, use, and monitoring of rated and approved equipment is usually the cause of equipment failure. The MTO and leaders must have sound knowledge of this and have systems in place to control and manage their equipment.

VIII. MTO Registration Validity & Fee Structure

The validity & fee structure for the registration and renewal of MTO is listed below:

S. No.	Application Type	Entity	Validity Period	Fee	
1.	New Registration	Mountaineering Operator	Tour	3 years	Rs. 5,000
2.	Renewal	Mountaineering Operator	Tour	3 years	Rs. 5,000

Note: The registration of the eligible MTO shall be valid up to the end of the second succeeding financial year i.e., up to 31st March of the second succeeding financial year. Example: If a new registration is made on 10th October 2024, it shall be valid up to 31st March 2027. This is to ensure that all MTO renewals are completed before the start of the mountaineering season in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

IX. MTO Registration Application Process

The Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh shall invite application from the eligible MTOs through the office of Assistant Director (Tourism), Leh & Kargil. Until the facility for submission of application is made online, eligible MTOs shall submit the application in hardcopy.

Note: The registration & renewal are subject to submission of complete application form (Annexure 1), prescribed fee, supporting documents, fulfilment of terms and conditions of the policy and inspection (wherever required). The inspection process shall be completed within 30 days from the receipt of complete application form. Action shall be taken against the Assistant Director (Tourism), Leh & Kargil if the registration process is not completed within the defined timeframe of 30 days.

X. Mountaineering Expedition Permit & Fee Structure

All registered MTOs shall obtain permit for every mountaineering expedition in the Union Territory of Ladakh from the office of Assistant Director (Tourism), Leh & Kargil in the prescribed format (Annexure 2) at least 30 days before the start of the expedition, and the permit shall be granted within 10 days from the receipt of complete application form.

While multiple groups can climb a particular peak, maximum 14 members shall be permitted per expedition. The maximum number of climbers shall not exceed 40 members at a time on each peak.

Category of Peak	Foreign Team	Domestic Team	Local Team
Peaks below 6,500 mt. (maximum 100 permits per peak per calendar year)	USD 50 per member for up to a group of 5, with an additional USD 40 per member for up to a group of 14	Rs. 1,000 per member	Rs. 200 per member
Peaks between 6,501 - 7,000 mt. (maximum 70 permits per peak per calendar year)	USD 200 per member for up to a group of 5, with an additional USD 150 per member for up to a group of 14	Rs. 2,500 per member	Rs. 500 per member
Peaks above 7,001 mt. (maximum 50 permits per peak per calendar year)	USD 300 per member for up to a group of 5, with an additional USD 200 per member for up to a group of 14	Rs. 4,000 per member	Rs. 1,500 per member

Note: Until the facility of obtaining the mountaineering expedition permit is made online, eligible MTOs shall submit the application in hardcopy.

XI. Governing Committee

A 'Governing Committee' shall be constituted with specific functions for safe and sustainable operations of mountaineering expeditions in the Union Territory of Ladakh. The composition of the committee shall be as under:

Committee Functions	Members
The 'Governing Committee' shall meet at least once a year before the start of the mountaineering season in the Union Territory of Ladakh, and shall be responsible for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Regulate the number of climbers on mountaineering peaks to prevent excessive crowding and to protect the delicate ecosystem.➤ Ensure that Mountaineering Tour Operators (MTOs) and guides comply	The 'Governing Committee' shall comprise of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Secretary Tourism, UT Ladakh (Chairperson)2. Deputy Commissioner, Leh3. Deputy Commissioner, Kargil4. Representative of LAHDC, Leh5. Representative of LAHDC, Kargil6. Representative of DDRF, UT Ladakh7. Representative of Ladakh Police8. Representative of CMO

<p>with all established safety procedures outlined in their guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement capacity-building initiatives. ➤ Guarantee the enforcement of a risk management matrix, along with emergency response and evacuation procedures. ➤ Allocate the collected permit fees towards the waste management and sanitation of the peaks and basecamps. ➤ Conduct unannounced inspections to verify compliance with guidelines, evaluate the quality and condition of equipment in use, and assess the environmental impact to inform adaptive management strategies. ➤ Provide a system for addressing grievances. ➤ Carry out additional duties related to mountaineering activities within the Union Territory of Ladakh. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Director (Tourism), UT Ladakh 10. Assistant Director (Tourism), Leh 11. Assistant Director (Tourism), Kargil 12. Joint Director, Youth Services & Sports 13. Deputy SSO, Leh, Youth Services & Sports 14. Deputy SSO, Kargil, Youth Services & Sports 15. Tourist Officer, Zanskar 16. Representative of the concerned operators' association/s of Ladakh
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Note: The Governing Committee shall meet before the start of the mountaineering season in Ladakh, to discuss the assigned functions, and accountability shall be aligned to concerned committee members for looking after their specific roles towards swift execution of mountaineering expeditions for the season. A quorum of two-third committee members shall be present for the meeting to be carried out. The committee can co-opt any expert with sector specific expertise for suggestions or guidance.

XII. Waste Management, Sanitation and Safety Committee

A sub-committee shall be constituted for monitoring the implementation of waste management practices at the basecamp, peaks and nearby settlements along with safety regulations of mountaineering expeditions. The composition of the sub-committee shall be as under:

Committee Functions	Members
<p>The 'Waste Management, Sanitation and Safety Committee' shall regularly meet during the mountaineering season in the Union Territory of Ladakh, and shall be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establishment of waste management and sanitation protocols at the basecamp, mountain summits, and adjacent communities. ➤ Enforcement of adherence to all prescribed safety protocols by MTOs and guides as per their regulations. ➤ Execution of additional responsibilities related to waste management, sanitation, and safety protocols during mountaineering activities within the Union Territory of Ladakh. 	<p>The 'Waste Management, Sanitation and Safety Committee' shall comprise of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director (Tourism), UT Ladakh (Chairperson) 2. Assistant Director (Tourism), Leh 3. Assistant Director (Tourism), Kargil 4. Tourist Officer, Zanskar 5. Representative of the Rural Development Department 6. Representative of DDRF, UT Ladakh 7. Representative of Ladakh Police 8. Representative of the concerned operators' association/s of Ladakh

XIII. Joint Expedition

MTOs shall ensure that joint mountaineering expeditions are encouraged in the Union Territory Ladakh to promote goodwill, inclusivity among group members and to minimize the ecological impact on the pristine ecology. Any group of expedition members, their clubs/ associations/ sponsors/ organizers shall check with their MTOs to prioritize joint expedition to peaks in Ladakh. The leader of the expedition shall be an Indian national, while the foreign team leader shall be the deputy leader.

XIV. SOPs & Operating Instructions

All MTOs must maintain and update a standard operating procedure for their operations and get the same vetted by the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh from time to time.

Besides covering the methodologies that are adopted by the MTO in organizing the expedition, such as assessing members' qualifications, medical conditions, and experience, procedures for obtaining various permissions, travel to the mountain, maintenance of basecamp including hygiene, avoidance of high altitude sickness, safety precautions, communication, weather reports, the procedure for emergencies, casualty evacuation, incident and accident reporting, and feedback mechanism, the following must be included in the SOPs:

1. No solo expedition shall be allowed.
2. The number of guides and porters, as well as the quality of equipment and supplies provided, must be sufficient for the expedition's objectives and correspond appropriately to the size of the expedition group.
3. It is preferable to have a seasoned doctor included in the group; if not, reliable on-call medical assistance must be arranged. Additionally, proactive plans for evacuation support should be in place for emergencies.
4. Advertisements must give a true picture of all mountaineering hazards and dangers involved.
5. The client is required to honestly disclose their experience, corroborated by documents or photographs, age, and medical history, among other details, to the MTO for them to make a well-informed decision regarding the prospective client.
6. The information provided beforehand will contain explicit details about the guides, porters, and equipment that the MTO will supply, as well as specifics regarding the attire and gear the client should bring.
7. One-day (24 hours) acclimatization is mandatory before starting the expedition.
8. Prohibition of Fixed Camps: To preserve the nature and environment, and ensure minimal ecological footprint, no MTO shall be permitted to establish fixed camps/ permanent camps along any designated mountaineering routes, basecamps, trails and camping points. This includes the installation of permanent or semi-permanent structures such as tents, shelters, or any other infrastructure that remain in place beyond the duration of a single mountaineering expedition.
9. MTOs are required to adhere strictly to a 'leave no trace' principle, ensuring that all camping setups are temporary and that all equipment and waste are removed from the site at the end of each expedition. Compliance with this regulation shall be monitored regularly by the Assistant Director (Tourism), Leh/ Kargil, and violations may result in penalties including fines, suspension of MTO registration and mountaineering expedition permit, or any other penalty as deem appropriate.

XV. Documentation

All registered MTOs shall maintain the following documents:

1. Comprehensive information on all guides and instructors, including copies of their qualifications, documentation of their experience, and client reviews.
2. Copies of all current expedition permits and authorizations.
3. Copies of identification papers, insurance policies, medical records, and next of kin contact information for all participants, guides, and instructors.
4. A copy of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) sanctioned by the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh.

5. An up-to-date directory of emergency contact numbers.
6. A detailed emergency response strategy.

XVI. Risk Mitigation Measures

1. Individuals aged 18 to 65 years are eligible to participate in mountaineering expeditions within the Union Territory of Ladakh. Exceptions to the age requirement may be made with the provision of a medical fitness certificate from a certified healthcare professional located in the Union Territory of Ladakh.
2. Each climber in the group must submit a medical/ fitness certificate without fail, which should be obtained after their arrival and acclimatization period in Ladakh.
3. At least one or two members of the expedition should have experience in high-altitude climbing.
4. The MTO is required to possess radio communication devices to facilitate contact between the mountain camps and the basecamp.
5. The MTO is obligated to have or supply radio receivers capable of tuning in to weather updates broadcasted by the All India Radio (AIR).
6. Expeditions must incorporate environmental protection measures to ensure that the visited areas and peaks remain undamaged and clean for future mountaineering groups.
7. All environmental regulations issued by the relevant authority must be adhered to rigorously.

XVII. Emergencies and Rescues during Expeditions

1. Comprehensive first aid supplies must be on hand, including Pulse Oximeters as a component of the first-aid kit.
2. Evacuation pathways should be clearly established and familiar to all team members, including participants, guides, and instructors.
3. A well-documented emergency response plan should be readily accessible at the base camp, along with information on the nearest emergency services that can be summoned if necessary.
4. Oxygen supplies and a Gamow Bag (Portable Altitude Chamber or similar devices) should be readily available at the base camp for emergency situations.
5. Walkie-talkies should be provided for use at the basecamp and distributed to the group during climbing activities, as well as at all camps occupied by climbers.
6. For routes with a significant risk of avalanches or a history of avalanche incidents, avalanche transceivers, shovels, and probes should be carried.
7. The Mountaineering Tour Operator (MTO) must disclose the maximum size of the group in advance.

XIX. Safety Briefing

The lead guide or expedition leader is responsible for providing a thorough and comprehensive briefing to the expedition members prior to departure from the basecamp, which should cover:

1. The precise path, camp locations, and areas where ropes are secured. Information on potential hazards on the mountain and the anticipated weather conditions.
2. The procedures and protocols to be adhered to during the ascent, including the specifics of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
3. The responsibilities and duties of the lead guide and the assistant guide.
4. The steps to be taken and protocols to follow in case of an emergency.

XX. Insurance

Insurance is essential for mountaineers, guides, camp staff, porters, and pack animals due to the high risks involved in high-altitude climbing. For mountaineers, insurance acts as a financial safeguard against the costs of accidents, injuries, and emergency evacuations, offering reassurance and protection. Guides and camp staff are supported by insurance, which helps with medical costs, compensates for lost wages due to injury, and addresses potential legal issues, contributing to a more secure work environment. Porters, who bear

substantial loads and navigate difficult paths, need insurance to protect their well-being and financial stability. Similarly, insurance for pack animals like horses or yaks is critical, as it provides for their medical care and compensates for any losses, acknowledging their importance to the success of expeditions. MTOs are required to secure at least the minimum insurance coverage specified below:

1. Expedition members (mountaineers): Rs. 15 Lakhs per person
2. Camp crew, including guides and porters: Rs. 7 Lakhs per person
3. Animals: Rs. 20,000/- per animal

Camp crew, including guides and porters shall be enrolled with the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY).

XXI. Search & Rescue

In the event of an accident or death of an expedition member, the MTO/ guide shall promptly inform the nearest police station, contact the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Deputy Commissioner Leh/ Kargil or the nearest civil, army, or police authorities for assistance. Should assistance from military or paramilitary forces be required, the MTO/ guide shall make the necessary arrangements. If a helicopter is needed for search, rescue, or evacuation of an injured or ill person, arrangements shall be made for transportation to the nearest hospital. The costs for helicopter rescue sorties, including any abortive ones due to adverse weather, must be paid at the prescribed government rates, which are based on flight time and other factors. These charges shall be borne by the MTO/ expedition team.

XXII. Penalty & Caution

If any MTO or guide is found operating in violation of the terms & conditions of the policy, which includes but not limited to the failure on the part of the MTO or its authorized representative to maintain the requisite standards, reports of un-hygienic conditions, unlawful activities, malpractices, misbehavior with customers, climbing or attempting to climb a peak without permit, violating environmental protection regulations, etc., the registration of the MTO shall be liable for cancellation by the Department of Tourism directly, or on the recommendation of any competent authority of the Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh.

The Department of Tourism, or any other Department/ Authority of the Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh shall, in no way be responsible for any claims on account of any mishap.

XXIII. Responsibilities of the Mountaineering Tour Operators (MTOs)

1. **Route:** Any approved mountaineering expedition shall follow the approved route and NO deviation shall be permissible, except in case of an emergency.
2. **Abandoning the Expedition:** Once the leader or guide decides to abandon the expedition, the entire team must return to the basecamp or the district headquarters and immediately notify the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh.
3. **Splitting the Expedition Team:** Splitting of expedition team into two or more sub-groups is NOT allowed for any purpose other than to climb the summit in the form of ropes/ sub-groups beyond the basecamp.
4. **Prohibited Items:** Expedition members are not allowed to carry arms/ ammunition/ explosives, or any other prohibited item during the expedition. A non-exhaustive indicative list of prohibited items include, but not limited to, single use plastic items, narcotics items, flammable/ hazardous materials, non-approved drones and unregistered communication devices. However, the MTOs shall clearly list prohibited items during mountaineering expeditions as part of their SOPs and get the same vetted from the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh.
5. **Walkie Talkie Sets:** Expedition groups are recommended to employ portable walkie-talkies for internal communication beyond the basecamp. The MTOs are

permitted to use satellite phones during mountaineering expeditions, provided they comply with all regulations established by the relevant authorities.

6. **Professional Responsibility:** The MTOs may provide the expedition team with the utmost support in various aspects such as customs clearance, procurement of supplies, engaging porters, arranging mules or yaks, securing accommodations enroute to the mountains, organizing transportation, and coordinating with local civil, military, and paramilitary authorities. Additionally, they should maintain contact with meteorological services to select appropriate dates for the expedition that align with current weather conditions.
7. **Environmental Responsibility:** All members and the support staff must be thoroughly briefed and trained to be able to differentiate between biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste and its mode of disposal. At altitudes above the snow line, natural decomposition processes are slowed, thus the waste pollutes the mountain for many years. It should be a conscious effort of all concerned to leave the campsites and trails cleaner than they were found. The team shall adhere to the following specific regulations related to the disposal of waste on the mountain:
 - Bio-degradable waste is a type of waste that can be broken down into its base compounds by micro-organisms, air, moisture or soil in a reasonable amount of time. It includes green waste, food, paper, bio-degradable plastics, human waste, etc. and it shall be suitably disposed of only below the snow line.
 - At basecamp, a deep toilet hole must be dug in soil and all human excretion produced must be dumped in it during the team's stay.
 - Bio-degradable kitchen waste has to be deposited in a deep hole at base camp which is to be covered at the end of the expedition.
 - Non-biodegradable waste is a type of waste that cannot be broken down into its base compounds by micro-organisms, air, moisture or soil. Unlike biodegradable waste, non-biodegradable waste remains stable indefinitely. Because non-biodegradable waste cannot be broken down, recycling is the only option. Non-biodegradable waste includes rubber, Styrofoam, plastic, glass, metals, etc. and it shall be:
 - Collected in sacks and carried down from the camps to the road head.
 - Disposed-off at or below the road head.
 - Disposed-off by making over to vendors and other local garbage collectors in the area or as directed by local authorities.

XXIV. Mountaineering Expedition Report

The MTO shall mandatorily submit a comprehensive 'Mountaineering Expedition Report' for every expedition undertaken to the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh, within 15 days from the conclusion of the expedition, **as per the template provided in Annexure 4**. Any violation on this account would lead to cancellation of the registration of the MTO.

XXV. Code of Conduct for Responsible Mountaineering in Ladakh

1. Conserve Ladakh's natural and cultural heritage:
 - Do not trample high-altitude vegetation; do not pick any flowers or medicinal plants.
 - Do not disturb wildlife or its habitats.
 - Do not allow clients to purchase endangered animal parts or antique cultural artefacts.
 - Support local conservation efforts and income generation activities.
2. Avoid the use of fuel wood; use alternative fuels:
 - Use kerosene, LPG (or other non-wood fuel) for all cooking, heating, and lighting including that by staff and porters.
 - Discourage campfires; encourage camp entertainment.
 - Follow safety norms when carrying, storing and using kerosene and gas.
3. Leave all camps and trails clean:

- Separate and properly dispose of litter: burn burnable, bury biodegradable, and carry out all other non-biodegradable materials for deposit at designated trash sites or for recycling.
 - Use toilet tents on all treks; set up and use toilet tents in an environmentally sound manner so as to avoid pollution of water sources (at least 100 mt. away).
 - Use established campsites and kitchen sites; avoid trenching around tents.
4. Practice conservation in the kitchen:
- Avoid fuel-conservation menu items, e.g. baked foods and large menu selections.
 - Re-package foods into reusable plastic containers to reduce waste. Suggest clients reduce waste by de-and repackaging.
5. Practice proper hygiene and sanitation:
- Teach all staff about personal hygiene, sanitary kitchen and camp routines. Properly treat the drinking water and uncooked vegetables for clients.
 - Dispose of washing and bathing water well away (100 mt.) from streams; use biodegradable soaps.
6. Take responsibility for staff and porter welfare:
- Provide adequate warm clothing, sleeping cover, shoes, snow gear, food or cooking stoves and fuel, and take care of hired staff.
 - Periodically train staff in first aid, guide responsibilities, sanitation, etc.
7. Properly brief clients before leaving on a trek:
- Address cultural do's and don'ts, environmentally friendly behavior, safety precautions, proper dress, and respect for local beliefs, peoples and religious sites. Plan days for proper altitude acclimatization when ascending; know how to identify and treat high altitude illness and how to provide emergency rescue.
8. Advisory on solo mountaineering expeditions:
Solo expeditions in Ladakh are strongly discouraged due to safety concerns and potential difficulties with rescue operations. To ensure both safety and efficient rescue, mountaineers shall explore the mountains and peaks with a qualified and registered local guide/ s only.

These measures aim to mitigate the impact of human activity on fragile ecosystems, prevent overcrowding and ensure a safe experience for climbers, preserve the natural beauty and integrity of the peaks for future generations and prohibit unorganized expeditions. To ensure an equitable spread and avoid overcrowding, MTOs & climbers shall periodically consider alternative peaks for mountaineering expeditions.

XXVI. Grievance Redressal Mechanism

The Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh is committed to ensuring a safe and ethical environment for all mountaineers. In the event of any unethical practices by MTOs or guides like overcharging, harassment, misbehavior, flouting rules & regulations, non-compliance of any T&Cs by any competent authority, mountaineers are encouraged to report their grievances. These grievances shall be addressed with the utmost seriousness and dealt with strictly by the Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh. An escalation matrix has been established for the swift and efficient resolution of grievances, ensuring justice and maintaining the integrity of the mountaineering community in Ladakh.

Level	Authority	Contact Details	Turnaround Time
Level 1	Assistant Director (Tourism), Leh Assistant Director (Tourism), Kargil	adtleh@gmail.com adtkargil@gmail.com	10 Days
Level 2	Director (Tourism) Union Territory of Ladakh	directortourism Ladakh@gmail.com	7 Days
Level 3	Secretary Tourism Union Territory of Ladakh	comsecy tourism utl@gmail.com	7 Days

Note: The Department of Tourism, Union Territory of Ladakh reserves the right to modify the terms & conditions of the 'Ladakh Mountaineering Policy 2024' from time to time, as deem appropriate.

Draft

Annexure 1
Application Form
New Registration & Renewal of Mountaineering Tour Operator

To,

Assistant Director
(Tourism), Leh
Tourist Reception Centre
Near GPO, Leh 194101

Assistant
Director
(Tourism), Kargil,
Tourism Office,
Kargil 194103

Applicant's
Photograph

Ma'am/ Sir,

I/ We request that I/ we may be registered as Mountaineering Tour Operator with the Department of Tourism, Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh, to conduct mountaineering operations in the Union Territory of Ladakh. The other particulars are as under:

1. New Registration Renewal (Registration No.)

2. Name of the entity:

3. Details of the entity:

Registered Address			
Website		Mobile Number	
Email		Office Number	

4. Entity incorporation status (sole proprietorship/ partnership/ private/ public limited):

5. Year and month of establishment of entity:

6. Name of Director/ Directors/ Proprietors:

S. No.	Name	Designation	Mobile Number	Aadhaar Number

7. Ladakh Resident Certificate (LRC) details:

8. Details of staff with required certification details:

Name	Role	Certifications	Mobile Number	Aadhaar Number

CV of the staff along with all certifications to be enclosed.

9. Proof of insurance:

10. Details of equipment:

Equipment	Specifications	Quantity	Purpose

Copy of the equipment purchases invoices, equipment specifications, warranty and photographs to be enclosed.

Annexure 2
Application Form
Permit for Mountaineering Expedition in the Union Territory of Ladakh

To,

Assistant Director
(Tourism), Leh
Tourist Reception Centre,
Near GPO, Leh 194101

Assistant Director
(Tourism), Kargil
Tourism Office,
Kargil 194103

1. Name of the peak:
2. Altitude of the peak:
3. Period of expedition (start date & end date):
4. Proposed route:
5. Name of the Mountaineering Tour Operator (MTO):
6. Registration number of the Mountaineering Tour Operator (MTO):
7. Details of the expedition leader (Name, nationality, certifications, mobile number & Aadhaar number):
8. Details of the expedition group (mountaineers, guides & crew):

Name	Nationality	Certifications	Mobile Number	National ID Number

Note: Expedition itinerary, proof of permit fee for each member, national identification proof for each member (passport for foreign national and Aadhaar card for Indian nationals), copy of valid visa for foreign nationals, copy of applicable permit or environment fee, insurance details for each member to be enclosed.

Declaration: It is hereby certified that the information provided is true to the best of our knowledge and we agree to abide by all the terms and conditions laid down by the Department of Tourism, Union Territory of Ladakh for undertaking the proposed mountaineering expedition.

Signature:

Name of the MTO:

Authorized Representative:

Designation:

Annexure 3 Declaration by Mountaineer

I, the undersigned, hereby declare and undertake the following in connection with my participation in the mountaineering expedition to (Name of the peak) _____ scheduled from (start date) _____ to (end date) _____ :

1. Personal Information:

- Full Name:
- Date of Birth:
- Nationality:
- Passport / National Identification Number:
- Contact Information:

2. Expedition Details:

- Name of the Expedition:
- Duration of the Expedition:
- Route/ Trail:

3. Health and Fitness:

- I declare that I am in good health and physically fit to undertake this expedition.
- I have undergone a medical examination and obtained a fitness certificate from a registered medical practitioner.
- I have no medical conditions or disabilities that could impede my ability to safely participate in the expedition.

4. Experience and Training:

- I have sufficient experience and training in mountaineering to safely participate in this expedition.
- I am familiar with the equipment and techniques required for the expedition.

5. Risk Acknowledgment:

- I understand and acknowledge the inherent risks and dangers associated with mountaineering, including but not limited to extreme weather conditions, avalanches, falls, altitude sickness, and other natural hazards.
- I accept full responsibility for any injury, loss, or damage that may occur to me or my property during the expedition.

6. Compliance:

- I agree to comply with all rules, regulations, and guidelines set forth by the expedition leader, organizing body, and relevant authorities.
- I will follow all safety protocols and instructions given by the expedition leader and guides.

7. Insurance:

- I have obtained adequate insurance coverage for the expedition, including medical, evacuation, and repatriation expenses.
- Details of the insurance policy:

8. Liability Waiver:

- I release and hold harmless the expedition organizers, leaders, guides, and any associated entities from any liability, claims, or demands arising out of my participation in the expedition.

9. Emergency Contact:

- Name:

- Relationship:
- Contact Information:

I hereby declare that the information provided above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any false information or failure to comply with the above declarations may result in my disqualification from the expedition and potential legal consequences.

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Draft

Annexure 4

Mountaineering Expedition Report

The Mountaineering Expedition Report shall include a detailed route itinerary specifying dates, times, heights, and locations of the climbs, details of the team members, waste management and sanitation measures and images/ videos of the panoramic views from the peak, and that of team members at the summit or the highest point reached.

1. Name of the expedition:
2. Dates of the expedition:
3. Height of the peak:
4. Details of the itinerary followed:
5. Was the prescribed route followed? Give reasons, if not:
6. Local flora and fauna seen (attach photographs):
7. Status of existing plastic waste/ other types of waste enroute (include location and attach photographs):
8. Contribution made to the environment by the expedition team:
9. Site specific suggestions for development of basecamp and other basic facilities:

Note: The MTO must also submit high-resolution images of the expedition as part of the report for the promotion of mountaineering activities through various marketing initiatives of Ladakh Tourism.