Illegal Trekking Operators

Increasing number of illegal trekking operators is becoming a serious problem for Nepali trekking industry. As an umbrella organization of trekking agencies in Nepal, Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN) would like to request all trekkers to take the service of only the government authorized trekking companies for ethical, legal and trouble-free trekking trips in Nepal.

Who are the illegal trekking operators?

1. "Tour leaders" based in foreign countries

It has come to our notice that some ‘tour leaders’ are forming trekking groups at their home country and operating in Nepal without taking the service of local companies and paying no taxes at all to the government except the national park fees. Most of the trekkers joining these groups do not know that they are avoiding taxes and their trip is illegal. According to Nepal’s legal provision, no foreigner can independently operate trekking trips in Nepal. These illegal operators do not insure their porters and guides and trekkers are likely to face difficulty in arranging emergency evacuation as they do not have any representatives in Nepal. As a responsible human being, it is your duty to ask your group leader/tour organizer whether or not they are joining any local company. We kindly request you to make a trip which is ethical and legal and avoid yourself from falling into unnecessary trouble.

2. Some Nepalese trekking guides

The existing tourism law does not allow a Nepali trekking guide to independently operate or run a trekking trip. A trekking guide can either work with a trekking company or work as a freelance guide offering his/her guiding services but can not organize a trekking trip. Many trekkers, who are not aware of existing laws, are found to be asking trekking guides to organize their trip (instead of asking a trekking company). This would be just 'paying for a trouble'. If your trekking guide proposes you to organize a trip, your answer should be 'No'.

A trekking guide himself is not insured and he would not insure the trekking staffs that he takes along. Only a registered trekking company can insure all its trekking staffs accompanying the groups. If something goes wrong with the porters and guides, the trekkers who hire them would be liable for their emergency evacuation, medical treatments and other emergencies, which will cost a huge amount. Equally serious is, if you fall sick or get injured in the mountains, they can not arrange emergency evacuation for you.

In case your belongings are stolen or if somebody harmed you while on the trek, you will be unable to complain anywhere because your trekking status is already illegal. Most of such cases have happened with the trekkers who join illegal treks where there would be no responsible party for the whole organizing.

May of these trekking guides or other individuals are found running these operations through their websites in the name of fake companies. Some of the websites run by illegal operators are listed below:

www.nepaleasytreks.com

www.nepaltrekadventure.com

We will keep on updating the list.

3. Hotels

We have found that many trekkers are buying trekking package from the hotel where they stay, which is not legal. According to existing laws, your hotel cannot organize a trek. From legal point of view, buying a trek through your hotel is like buying through an individual. However, if you buy the trip through the travel counter run by an authorized company in the hotels (make sure that it is the counter of authorized company), it is all right.

All the foreigners, including those working in the diplomatic missions or NGOs /INGOs, are also required to join the trekking company for their trekking trips except in some special cases. Since trekking companies have been authorized by the government to organize trekking trips, you will always get better rates and attractive trips through a trekking company.

As a foreigner, you can go embark on trekking trips independently without taking the services of a guide or porter-- ***self guided and carrying your luggage yourself***, but if you take the services of the guide or porter, you must go through an authorized trekking company and that these staffs must be insured.

TAAN, along with other concerned government bodies, is enforcing strict provisions at check points along the trekking trail to discourage illegal trekking trips. We would like to inform all the trekkers to use the services of the authorized operators and avoid getting returned form trek if found trekking illegally.

Your support in this regard would help us to make your trip both financially and physically safe, ethical and help the tax sustain tax paying companies and the government to get optimum benefits from the trekking sector.