



## Code of Conduct for Outbound Tour Escorts

### I. Objectives

Tour escorts play a pivotal role in the outbound industry. The objectives of this Code are:

1. To ensure that tour escorts possess proper service principles and professional ethics, and provide safe, well-run itineraries and the highest standard of service for outbound tour participants according to the arrangements of travel agents;
2. To encourage the continuing education and self-development of tour escorts;
3. To cultivate an earnest, responsible working attitude of tour escorts; and
4. To enhance the reputation of the outbound industry and the tour escort profession, and to promote the development of both.

### II. Principles

Tour escorts shall always pay attention to professional ethics, perform their duties with enthusiasm and strictly follow the principles set out below:

1. Tour escorts shall possess good professional qualities and ethics in order to uphold the image and reputation of travel agents and the outbound industry.
2. Tour escorts shall familiarise themselves with and act according to this Code and all regulations of the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) applicable to their tour-escorting work.
3. Tour escorts shall understand their duties, strive to provide the highest standard of service in an honest and fair manner, and be ready to contribute to the development of the outbound industry.

### III. Tour escorts' professional ethics

#### 1. Provision of highest standard of service

Tour escorts shall strive to serve tour participants during the trip.

#### 2. Commitment to professional ethics

Tour escorts shall adhere to professional ethics. When receiving tour participants, they shall:

- 2.1 be well-behaved, dutiful, discreet, sincere, courteous, punctual, attentive and patient, and strive to uphold the overall interests of the tour group;
- 2.2 take care of all tour participants in a fair and patient manner irrespective of their age, sex, physical condition, religion, race or nationality;
- 2.3 provide tour participants with accurate and fact-based information, and contact relevant organisations such as government departments, insurance companies and tourism bureaux for verification if necessary;
- 2.4 respect the customs and habits of the destinations;
- 2.5 not smoke in front of tour participants in order to protect the health of the tour participants and maintain the freshness of the air during the trip;
- 2.6 not drink alcohol, take drugs or gamble before and during work in order not to affect their judgement and concentration when performing their duties;



- 2.7 not recommend or sell medicine or any illicit items to tour participants; and
- 2.8 not seize or take away, or threat to seize or take away the travelling documents of tour participants.

### **3. Appearance**

Tour escorts shall dress properly to enhance their professional image. Apart from bringing along their Tour Escort Pass issued by the TIC when performing their duties, they shall wear it on their chest when the tour groups assemble for departure.

### **4. Safety of tour groups**

- 4.1 Tour escorts shall always give the highest priority to the safety of tour groups, tactfully remind tour participants to be watchful about personal belongings, and pay attention to the safety of food, transport, accommodation, sightseeing and other activities.
- 4.2 In case of accidents, tour escorts shall arrange professional treatment for the injured tour participants without delay, contact the insurance companies (if the tour participants have bought travel insurance), arrange emergency rescue service (if necessary), and report the accidents to their travel agent. They shall report the accidents to the police if the liability of third parties is involved.
- 4.3 Tour escorts shall help to arrange medical treatment for tour participants who have fallen ill and contact the insurance companies (if the tour participants have bought travel insurance) without delay, and decide, after considering the situation, whether they need to report it to their travel agent. They shall report the situation to their travel agent and/or the police if many tour participants have fallen ill or the liability of third parties may be involved.

[For safety issues of tour groups, please refer to the Safety Checklist in the Appendix.]

### **5. Honouring service pledges**

Tour escorts shall provide tour participants with the highest standard of service in accordance with their travel agent's itinerary arrangements and the provisions of the travel service contract. They shall not alter the itinerary, which includes adding or cancelling any of its items, without the consent of the tour participants and their travel agent. If alteration is necessary because of emergencies or special circumstances, they shall clearly explain the reasons for such alteration to the tour participants and report it to their travel agent without delay.

### **6. Promoting a spirit of cooperation**

Tour escorts shall maintain a good and incorruptible working relationship with partners such as local tourist guides and tour coach drivers, and the staff of all service providers such as attractions, theme parks, hotels, restaurants and tour coach companies.

### **7. Respect for other industry members**

Tour escorts shall not defame other industry members.



#### **8. Rules governing acceptance of service charges**

- 8.1 Tour escorts shall comply with rules governing service charges stipulated by the TIC and their travel agent.
- 8.2 Tour escorts shall not collect service charges from tour participants by any coercive means, nor shall they allow their service to be affected because few or no service charges are given.

#### **9. Rules governing self-pay activities**

- 9.1 Tour escorts shall comply with rules governing self-pay activities stipulated by the TIC and their travel agent.
- 9.2 Tour escorts shall not coerce tour participants into joining self-pay activities, and shall let them freely decide whether to join such activities according to their preferences.
- 9.3 Prior to arranging self-pay activities, tour escorts shall explain clearly to tour participants the content, duration, fee, safety and responsibility of such activities.
- 9.4 Tour escorts shall make appropriate arrangements for those tour participants who do not join self-pay activities when such activities are held.

#### **10. Rules governing shopping activities**

Tour escorts shall not coerce and/or through inaccurate information mislead tour participants into purchasing any goods, nor shall they allow their service attitude to be affected because tour participants are unwilling to purchase.

#### **11. Prohibition of tour-departure fees**

Tour escorts shall not at any time solicit or collect any form of fees from tour participants for leaving the tour in the middle of the trip.

### **IV. Abiding by the law**

Tour escorts shall abide by, and help tour participants to understand and abide by, the laws of Hong Kong and the destinations.

### **V. Interpretation, enforcement and penalty**

This Code is promulgated by the TIC and shall be observed by all tour escorts. Enforcement and decisions on violations of this Code are made in accordance with interpretations by the TIC Board of Directors, which has the power to penalise tour escorts found to be in breach of this Code. Tour escorts found to be in breach of any provisions of this Code or unsuitable to continue to perform the duties of tour escorts because of misconduct may have their Tour Escort Pass suspended or revoked. The Board reserves the right to amend any provisions of this Code.

*October 2007*

## Appendix

### Safety Checklist

(This Checklist is extracted from the October 2007 edition of the *Risk Solutions Manual for Travel Industry in Hong Kong*. The *Manual* is not legal opinion and does not contain or purport to contain any specific legal advice on the matters covered therein. All templates, specimens, sample clauses, agreements, documents and the like are provided strictly for reference and information only, and do not constitute legal advice on the matters covered therein.)

Tour Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Destination: \_\_\_\_\_ Land Operator: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Tourist guide: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Tour Escort: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Inspection: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

#### 1.1 Tour coach

*The following items must be checked by the tourist guide before the tour group shows up. After the group has reached its destination, the tour escort must check again. If another tour coach is used during the trip, all the items must be checked again.*

Items for checking	Checking result and appropriate action to be taken
1 Conformity to legal requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No; another tour coach must be requested
2 With valid vehicle licence	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (valid until _____)  <input type="checkbox"/> No; another tour coach must be requested
3 Physical appearance	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable (too shabby); another tour coach must be requested
4 No. of seats (must be conformed with the information stated in relevant documents such as vehicle licence)	<input type="checkbox"/> No. of seats consistent with vehicle licence <input type="checkbox"/> No. of seats inconsistent with vehicle licence; another tour coach must be requested
5 No. of people on board	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ people  <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeding maximum capacity stated in vehicle licence; another tour coach must be requested
6 Windows of the tour coach	<input type="checkbox"/> Undamaged <input type="checkbox"/> Cracked; adhesive tape must be stuck on the crack(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Damaged; another tour coach must be requested
7 Emergency exit	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; and <input type="checkbox"/> The exit is blocked <input type="checkbox"/> The exit is not blocked <input type="checkbox"/> No
8 Ask the driver if safety checks on the condition	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

- of the coach, e.g., the tread and air pressure of tyres, have been made in advance every day
- 9 Safety belts at passenger seats
- 10 Door side assistance (When customers are alighting from the coach, the tourist guide/tour escort or accompanying staff must stand by the door side of the coach to help all customers to step on the ground properly before moving on to other activities)
- 11 Other matters that affect safety
- No; the driver must be reminded to do safety checks
- Yes; remind the tour group to wear safety belts for personal safety
- No; if local regulations require tour coaches to equip with safety belts, another tour coach must be requested
- Yes
- No; the tourist guide/tour escort or accompanying staff must be reminded to do so
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## 1.2 Tour coach driver

*The tourist guide and tour escort must carefully monitor the following.*

Items for checking	Checking result and appropriate action to be taken
1 The driver has valid driving licence	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; another driver must be requested
2 The driver is sick, drinking alcohol, tired, or seems to be under the influence of medicine or alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; another driver must be requested or the driver must be stopped from drinking alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> No
3 The driver drives safely and obeys traffic rules (e.g. not exceeding speed limit, following traffic lights)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; the driver must be asked to make improvement, and if there is no improvement, another driver must be requested
4 The driver smokes whilst driving	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; the driver must be asked to stop smoking immediately <input type="checkbox"/> No
5 When using communications equipment, the driver first parks the coach in a safe place, or uses a hand-free apparatus	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; the driver must be asked to make improvement, and if there is no improvement, another driver must be requested
6 Other matters that affect safety	<hr/>

## 1.3 Charter vessel, sightseeing boat or other means of transport

*The tourist guide and tour escort must carefully check the following. They must pay constant attention to the weather condition. In case of bad weather, they must carefully consider whether the trip should continue or the itinerary should be changed for the safety of the tour group.*

Items for checking	Checking result and appropriate action to be taken
1 With valid navigation and tourist-carrying licence	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; if local regulations require its licence to be displayed, another vessel must be requested
2 Capacity (no. of people)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not overloaded <input type="checkbox"/> Overloaded; the tour group must not board the vessel
3 Life jackets and buoys in positions easy to take	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; warn the tour group
4 Clear instruction in using life jackets	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; provide guidance to the tour group on how to use life jackets before the vessel trip begins
5 Speed of vessel	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Too fast; the captain must be asked to make improvement, if there is no improvement, another vessel operator must be requested
6 Pier facilities (for embarking on the vessel)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good / safe <input type="checkbox"/> Poor / unsafe; warn the tour group; report to Travel Agent
7 Pier facilities (for disembarking from the vessel)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good / safe <input type="checkbox"/> Poor / unsafe; warn the tour group; report to Travel Agent
8 Life guards on duty on beaches / aquatic activity venues	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; warn the tour group
9 Other matters that affect safety	_____

## 2. MEALS

*The following must be carefully checked by the tourist guide and tour escort every day and before every meal.*

Items for checking	Checking result and appropriate action to be taken
1 Hygiene of the dining place	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Bad; another dining place must be arranged; report to Travel Agent
2 Hygiene of food	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Bad; another dining place must be arranged; report to Travel Agent
3 Hygiene of eating utensils	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Bad; report to restaurant and the utensils must be replaced with clean ones
4 Floor surface of the dining place	<input type="checkbox"/> Dry <input type="checkbox"/> Wet; tour group must be warned of danger of slip and fall

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|---|--|--|
| 5 | Distance of the dining table(s) of the tour group from the kitchen | <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate<br><input type="checkbox"/> Too near; warn the tour group   |
| 6 | Dining place has emergency signs and fire escape routes            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not prominent; warn the tour group<br><input type="checkbox"/> No; tourist guide and tour escort look for the emergency exits, warn the tour group and report to Travel Agent |
| 7 | Fire fighting equipment  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No; report to Travel Agent  |
| 8 | Other matters that affect hygiene and safety                       | _____  |

### 3. HOTEL / ACCOMMODATION

*The tourist guide and tour escort must carefully check the following items and remind the tour group to take note of instructions on emergency procedures. Whenever the tour group stays at another hotel, all the items must be checked again.*

Items for checking	Checking result and appropriate action to be taken
1 Maps showing fire escape routes / emergency exits, and emergency procedures posted	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; the hotel must be asked to provide such information for the tour group
2 Positions of such maps or procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Prominent <input type="checkbox"/> Not prominent; advise the tour group where they are
3 Fire fighting equipment, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Automatic sprinkler</li> <li>▪ Smoke detector</li> <li>▪ Fire extinguisher</li> <li>▪ Fire hose</li> <li>▪ Emergency lighting system</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; advise the tour group of the presence of the equipment <input type="checkbox"/> No; warn the tour group; report to Travel Agent
4 Windows of hotel rooms	<input type="checkbox"/> Can be opened <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot be opened; warn the tour group
5 Life guards on duty by pool side	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; warn the tour group; advise tour members to have companions when using the pool
6 Other matters that affect safety	_____

### 4. ACTIVITIES

#### 4.1 Activities within the itinerary

*The tourist guide and tour escort must carefully check the following items.*

Items for checking	Checking result and appropriate action to be taken
1 Any tour member feels sick	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; advise and/or arrange for the tour member to consult doctor <input type="checkbox"/> No
2 Any tour member feels sick at high altitudes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; arrange for the tour member to consult doctor <input type="checkbox"/> No
3 Any tour member is injured in accident	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; arrange for the tour member to seek medical assistance; report to Travel Agent immediately <input type="checkbox"/> No

#### 4.2 Optional activities

*The tourist guide and tour escort must carefully check the following items.*

Items for Checking	Checking result and appropriate action to be taken
1 Activity provider approved and arranged by Travel Agent	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No; the activities must not be arranged
2 Safety warnings	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; bring to the attention of the tour members <input type="checkbox"/> No; remind the tour members to beware of personal safety
3 Assumption of Risk Statement and Liability Waiver Form signed by tour members	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; tour escort or tourist guide has explained the details of the forms <input type="checkbox"/> No; the activities must not be arranged

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by tour escort

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by tourist guide

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date