



香港旅遊業議會
TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL
OF HONG KONG

Incorporated with limited liability

**Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to
Organise Inbound Tour Groups
of not more than 100 persons that
need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals**

Guide to Application¹

(with effect from 18 November 2022)

I. Introduction

The Government announced on 7 November 2022 that specific arrangements for inbound tour group travellers will be launched, in a bid to support the gradual resumption of the inbound travel market in an orderly manner and provide a more favourable business environment for the travel trade. In this connection, conditional exemption will be granted for licensed travel agents to organise inbound tour groups for not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals under the group gathering restrictions as stipulated in the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) starting from 18 November 2022, subject to compliance with special anti-epidemic measures by travel agents and the local catering premises concerned.

II. Details of the Conditional Exemption

Conditions for the exemption for licensed travel agents to organise inbound tour groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals

Licensed travel agents must fulfil all the following conditions in order to be eligible for the granting of the conditional exemption to organise inbound tour groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals:

1. they must hold a valid travel agent's licence under the Travel Industry Ordinance (Cap. 634) and register with the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong ("TIC");

¹ Note: This Guide to Application should be read with the "Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Inbound Tour Groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals: Application Form", with particular attention paid to "Section B: Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Inbound Tour Groups (for group tour of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals)" therein.

2. they must complete and sign the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Inbound Tour Groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals: Application Form” and undertake to enforce anti-epidemic measures in strict accordance with the “Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Inbound Tour Groups (for group tour of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals)” contained therein in order that public health is not affected. If there is any change to the content of the “Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Inbound Tour Groups (for group tour of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals)”, the updated version will be published at TIC website without making individual notification.

Details of registration

1. After successful registration, licensed travel agents will be issued with a document of proof for identification. The registration of any registered licensed travel agents may be revoked in accordance with section V.
2. Licensed travel agents which fail to be registered are not granted the conditional exemption to organise inbound tour groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals.
3. If registered licensed travel agents organise inbound tour groups whose itineraries are not registered with TIC, such inbound tour groups are not covered by the exemption concerned, thus subject to the group gathering restrictions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G).
4. Licensed travel agents must register both themselves and each of the itineraries of their inbound tour groups (including dates of arrival and departure, information of restaurants) and number of inbound tour group participants with TIC at least 5 working days prior to the tour group’s arrival at Hong Kong, in order to be granted the conditional exemption to organise inbound tour groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals. Licensed travel agents must retain the names and contact information of all inbound tour group participants for 31 days (counting the day following which the tour itinerary completes) to facilitate contact tracing and random checking by the authorities if needed.
5. When arranging inbound tour group participants to dine in a restaurant (excluding any bars or pubs), licensed travel agents must ensure that the restaurant is registered with TIC. The restaurant concerned must -
 - (i) arrange for inbound tour group participants of each banquet of inbound tour group(s) to have meals in rooms, enclosed venues with full partitions (which means that no one other than the relevant tour participants are allowed to dine in the same restaurant during the same time session), or in an entire approved outside seating accommodation (which means that the outside seating accommodation is apparently segregated and carries an independent entrance), and no other working staff accompanying the tour group(s), staff members of

the restaurant and other customers will have meals at the same time in that area as well as no live performance is allowed in that area at the time of having meals;

- (ii) arrange seats for inbound tour group participants in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), and food should be served to individual persons with no sharing of food allowed between guests as well as not arrange participants of different inbound tour groups to sit at the same table during the same banquet of inbound tour group(s);
 - (iii) dedicated serving staff must be arranged when the restaurant is serving at the same time both inbound tour groups and public customers, with thorough disinfection after serving each banquet of inbound tour group(s);
 - (iv) thorough disinfection must be made to surface and items used by inbound tour group participants after each meal;
 - (v) ventilation requirements for the private room(s) or enclosed venues in which inbound tour group participants have meal(s) must meet the standard as stipulated in the prevailing Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F);
 - (vi) arrange for all staff members involved in serving the inbound tour group participants to undergo a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid (“PCR”) test once every 3 days before entry into the restaurant; and
 - (vii) allow personnel of TIC and/or the Travel Industry Authority (“TIA”) to conduct inspection in respect of inbound tour groups at the restaurant during its business hours, and staff members of the restaurant must provide assistance to TIC and/or TIA in relation to the above-mentioned inspection, complaints and/or related matters.
6. Travel agents must register the tour itineraries (including the visiting restaurants) of inbound tour groups with TIC in advance; the authorised person of the restaurants concerned must sign an undertaking pledging compliance with the relevant arrangements, and submit to TIC via the travel agent responsible for receiving the tour group together with the restaurant’s floor plan² (if the restaurant has more than one floor, then it must submit a floor plan for each floor). If the restaurant is in violation of the undertaking, it will be suspended from receiving inbound tour groups for one month from the date of the notification issued by TIC. Travel agents must not arrange inbound tour group participants to dine in a restaurant which registration is suspended by TIC.
7. Licensed travel agents must arrange accommodation for inbound tour group participants in a licensed hotel/guesthouse on the “List of hotels and guesthouses which accept guests infected with COVID-19 for in-situ isolation” ([List of hotels](#)) or

² A layout plan not less than 297×420 mm (A3 size) showing the partitioned area, with official stamp and authorised signature (manager or above), must be submitted to TIC.

on cruise ships visiting Hong Kong (applicable to international cruise passengers only).

8. Licensed travel agents must provide all inbound tour group participants with tour labels (e.g. stickers with the name of the travel agent concerned) so that he/she can be identified as tour participant of inbound tour groups organised by the travel agent concerned. Licensed travel agent must also request inbound tour group participants to wear the tour labels at all times during the arranged itineraries of the tour group.
9. Licensed travel agents, when organising inbound tour groups under the conditional exemption, must assign tourist guides with a valid Tourist Guide Licence issued by TIA or a pre-existing tourist guide pass (issued by TIC) taken as a valid Tourist Guide Licence to receive inbound tour groups.
10. Licensed travel agents must ensure that the working staff accompanying and/or receiving inbound tour groups (e.g. tourist guides, drivers of chartered tour coaches and crew of chartered ferries) must have received three doses of COVID-19 vaccine prior to receiving inbound tour group; for those working staff (a) who are unfit, on medical ground, to be administered with a COVID-19 vaccine and/or (b) who had been infected with and/or had recovered from COVID-19, the travel agent must ensure that they have declared that fact in the specified form to the travel agent with the production of the relevant medical certificate or recovery record (as the case may be). Licensed travel agent must ensure that the working staff accompanying and/or receiving inbound tour groups, within 48 hours prior to commencing receiving the relevant inbound tour group and within 48 hours after finishing receiving the relevant inbound tour group, undergo a PCR test with a negative result and produce a negative result of the test to the travel agent.

III. Application Procedures for Registration

1. Application must be submitted to TIC by licensed travel agents via the e-application platform available at TIC website (www.tichk.org) > Travel Agents > [Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents](#):
 - Complete and sign “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Inbound Tour Groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals: Application Form” (once for each travel agent when registering for the first time)
 - Complete the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Inbound Tour Groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals: Itinerary Registration Form”, and submit together with the upload of undertaking signed by the operator(s) of the restaurant(s) included the itinerary of inbound tour group and the floor plan of the restaurant(s) concerned (if the restaurant(s) not yet registered with TIC).
2. Licensed travel agents must register each of the itineraries of their inbound tour groups prior to the tour group’s arrival at Hong Kong. Within 5 working days upon receipt of the registration form of the itineraries, and subject to the vetting process (including the inspection result of the concerned catering premises), TIC will issue to

the licensed travel agents a registration confirmation notice for the itineraries, or (if the vetting process is still underway) an acknowledgement receipt of the registration of the itineraries.

3. If licensed travel agents intend to revise the itineraries of their registered inbound tour groups, the revised itineraries (which means the attractions, transport, accommodation and meals of the itineraries are revised) should be regarded as new ones and then filed a new for registration.
4. Upon request by TIC or TIA, licensed travel agents must provide documentary proof in relation to the itineraries filed for registration and the anti-epidemic measures they have undertaken to adopt for verification purposes. Failure to do so will have such itineraries denied registration.
5. The itineraries of inbound tour groups which are successfully registered will be uploaded to TIC website once on the afternoon of each working day. Only those itineraries which have been uploaded to TIC website are regarded as having been registered with TIC, thus enabling the licensed travel agents concerned to organise such inbound tour groups.
6. Licensed travel agents must provide the working staff accompanying and/or receiving the inbound group tours (e.g. tourist guides, drivers of chartered tour coaches and crew of chartered ferries, etc.) with the documentary proof of successful registration (including the proof of conditional exemption granted to the travel agent and the registration confirmation notice for the relevant itinerary (either a copy or electronic file)) in order to facilitate inspection by law-enforcement officers or TIA's officers.
7. If any registered itineraries of inbound tour groups, despite having been registered, are found to be in violation of any requirements of this Guide to Application, the "Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Inbound Tour Groups (for group tour of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals)" contained in the "Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Inbound Tour Groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals: Application Form", the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G), the registration of such itineraries will be revoked and such itineraries be removed from TIC website, and the licensed travel agent concerned is not allowed to organise inbound tour groups whose itineraries have been revoked.

IV. Monitoring Measures

1. TIA will conduct inspection (including spot checks and undercover actions) in order to ensure that those inbound tour groups organised by the licensed travel agents having been granted the conditional exemption to organise inbound tour groups comply with all the anti-epidemic undertakings.

2. All the information of the licensed travel agents having been granted the conditional exemption and the itineraries of inbound tour groups having been registered will be uploaded to TIC website in order for inspection by law-enforcement officers and members of the public.

V. Consequences of Violating Undertakings

1. If any inbound tour groups organised under the conditional exemption are found by law-enforcement officers to be in violation of any anti-epidemic laws or regulations or by TIC or TIA to be in violation of the requirements of this Guide to Application or the “Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Inbound Tour Groups (for group tour of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals)” contained in the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Inbound Tour Groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals: Guide to Application”, the conditional exemption granted to the travel agent concerned will be revoked for one month (counting from the day of notification of the violation concerned by TIC) and the travel agent concerned must not organise its registered inbound tour groups during that period.
2. In respect of any matters relating to inbound tour groups as mentioned in this Guide to Application and the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Inbound Tour Groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals: Application Form”, the decision of TIC is final.

VI. Points to note

1. If licensed travel agents have organised inbound tour groups of not more than 100 persons under the conditional exemption, they may apply for cash incentives under the Green Lifestyle Local Tour Incentive Scheme (“GLIS”) (starting from 1 December 2022) or the Cultural and Heritage Sites Local Tour Incentive Scheme (“CHIS”) if such inbound tour groups meet all the requirements of GLIS or CHIS. Licensed travel agents can use their registered itinerary(ies) (with the itinerary registration ID and designated green spots or designated cultural and heritage spots) to apply for either one of the Incentive Schemes via the e-application platform available at TIC website.
2. If any inbound tour groups organised by licensed travel agents under the conditional exemption are found by law-enforcement officers to be in violation of any anti-epidemic laws or regulations or by TIC or TIA to be in violation of the requirements of the “Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Inbound Tour Groups (for group tour of not more than 100 persons)” contained in the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Inbound Tour Groups of not more than 100 persons that need to enter into local catering premises for dine-in meals: Application Form”, the inbound tour groups in question will become ineligible for subsidies under the GLIS or CHIS.

3. If travel agents later apply for cash incentives under the GLIS or CHIS, TIC will check whether the itineraries of the inbound tour groups concerned have been registered in accordance with the requirements. Itineraries which are not registered are regarded as not yet allowed for the organisation of local group tours, and may also be deemed to be in violation of the group gathering restrictions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G), they will be ineligible for the cash incentives.

VII. Enquiry

For enquiries, please contact TIC:

- ◆ Website: www.tichk.org
- ◆ Tel: 2807 1199
- ◆ Email: exemption@tichk.org
- ◆ Address: Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong
Rooms 1706-1709, 250 King's Road, North Point, Hong Kong

VIII. Important Notes

1. TIC reserves the right to verify information with the service suppliers involved in the applications submitted by the Applicant.
2. The Applicant must complete the Application Form and provide all supporting documents in a timely and truthful manner.
3. TIC reserves the final discretion and right to amend this Guide to Application without prior notice.
4. TIC's decision on accepting or rejecting any application is final.