

Caribbean Community

EDICT OF GOVERNMENT

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CRCP 3 (2010) (English): Tour Guides



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CARICOM REGIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE

Tour guides

CRCP 3: 2010



Caribbean Community



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Committee representation

The preparation of this CARICOM Regional Code of practice was carried out under the supervision and guidance of the Regional Technical Committee for Tourism Services, (RTC 6), (hosted by the CARICOM Member States, Barbados and St. Lucia) which at the time comprised the following members:

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Caribbean Tourism Organization

Caribbean Hotel Association

St. Lucia Bureau of Standards

Caribbean Tourism Organisation

Organisation of American States

Barbados National Standards Institution

Caribbean Environmental Health Institute

Tourism Product Development Company
Limited, Jamaica

Caribbean Tourism Organisation

Barbados National Standards Institution

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Foreword

This CARICOM Regional Code of Practice recommends practices for the establishment and maintenance of the minimum acceptable level of service for tour guiding. Users of this Code of Practice are encouraged to go beyond the requirements documented here.

This document was developed because of the:

- a) importance of tourism to the economies of the CARICOM Member States;
- b) increasing demand for a variety of tours, such as. eco, nature and heritage, and the important role they play in the delivery and enjoyment of the overall tourism product;
- c) need to ensure that tour guides fully understand their roles and responsibilities so as to provide the highest standard of service towards the enjoyment, information and safety of customers;
- d) growing realization that tourism activities and development must be carried out in a sustainable manner; and
- e) recognition that the positive and negative impacts of tourism on local communities must be properly monitored and managed.

It was approved by the Thirty-first Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development on 29 November - 3 December 2010.

In the development of this Code of practice, assistance was derived from the following:

- a) United Nations World Tourism Organization, The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism;
- b) Trinidad and Tobago Standard TTS 579: 2001 – Code of Practice for Tour Guides;
- c) The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, Code of Guiding Practice.

1 Scope

This Code of Practice establishes the minimum acceptable levels of service for tour guides operating within the CARICOM Member States. It is also intended for use as a quality tool by:

- a) tour guides and tourism service providers;
- b) tour parties; and
- c) relevant authorities and agencies responsible for tourism within the CARICOM region.

This Code of Practice does not specify the criteria which are necessary for the licensing of tour guides operating within the CARICOM Member States.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Practice, the following terms and definitions shall apply.

2.1

aircraft

mechanically propelled device that is capable of flight and has been certified flight worthy by the national competent authority

EXAMPLE An aircraft may be a helicopter or an aeroplane

2.2

all-inclusive

agreed package of the tour including all charges that may be incurred while on tour

2.3

carrying capacity

maximum number of visitors that can use the tourist attraction without causing an unacceptable deterioration in the environment or an unacceptable decline in the quality of the visitor's experience

2.4

competent authority

agency or organization responsible for one or more of the following:

- a) tourism;
- b) licensing;
- c) regulation;
- d) registration;
- e) certification; or
- f) training

2.5

destination management services

services provided by a company, which may include contracts with hotels, transportation companies and or other suppliers, to create a tour package for resale directly to the consumer or travel agents

2.6

driver guide

driver who is a qualified tour guide and meets the requirements of this code and the legal requirements for operating a taxi

2.7

floating craft

propelled, passenger-bearing vessel that floats on water

2.8

motor vehicle

mechanically propelled vehicle intended or adapted for use on land

2.9

public liability insurance

insurance coverage given to a member of the public for loss of or damage to property or injury to self

2.10

quality

degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements

2.11

site and attraction

person, place, thing or event that is intended to attract people's interest

EXAMPLE Flora and fauna, cultural activity, indigenous peoples, natural or scenic wonder, man-made theme park, cultural or historic exhibition, wildlife or ecological park

2.12

tour

pre-arranged journey to one or more destinations, led by a tour guide

2.13

tour guide

person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural, natural and man-made heritage of an area, and who normally possesses an area-specific qualification, usually issued and or recognised by the national competent authority

2.14

tour itinerary

itemised aspects of the tour including the route and expected times of departure and return of the tour party

2.15

tour operator

registered company that provides a range of tour services for the international and or domestic tourism market. These services may include:

- a) destination management services;
- b) assembly of tour packages; and
- c) promotion of the tourism products and services of the relevant CARICOM Member States

2.16

tour package

combination of several travel components provided by one or more suppliers, which is sold to the consumer as a single product, at a single price

2.17

tour party

individual or a group of individuals participating in a tour

2.18

tourism

travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes

2.19

tourist

person travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than twelve consecutive months for leisure, business and other purposes

3 Legal requirements

All tour guide establishments operating in CARICOM Member States shall:

- a) conduct their businesses lawfully, in full compliance with all pertinent national legislations and regulations;
- b) trade fairly and responsibly, conducting their business with honesty, integrity and transparency; and
- c) be registered with the relevant national authorities.

4 Responsibilities of the tour guide

4.1 The tour guide manages the group, the flow and pace of the tour and delivers the itinerary and overall tour experience in a professional and hospitable manner while ensuring the safety and security of the tour party.

4.2 The major responsibilities of the tour guide should be to:

- a) contribute to the promotion and sustainable development of the tourism sector and the conservation of the environment, within the country where the tour is being offered;
- b) contribute to the promotion and preservation of local craft and culture;
- c) provide accurate reports on tours including recommendations for improvements;
- d) ensure that guided groups observe approved guidelines for interacting with the natural, cultural and heritage environments so as to minimise negative impacts on these at all times;
- e) be mindful at all times of duty of care, health and safety of the tour party;
- f) abide by all national legislation governing the operation and conduct of tours and tour guides;
- g) ensure there are adequate facilities for those members who have a disability and require specialised assistance;
- h) provide for the comfort, interest and enjoyment of the tour party;
- i) provide the tour party with accurate information about the social, historical, cultural and environmental attributes of a specific site or area and thereby enhancing their appreciation and understanding of their surroundings;

- j) ensure, as far as possible, that no laws are broken by the tour party;
- k) ensure that the tour itinerary outlined is generally adhered to while on tour; and
- l) establish a positive working relationship with all suppliers and contractors.

5 Training

5.1 All tour guides should be formally trained under a training programme approved by the relevant national competent authority. Training should include but not be limited to the following aspects of the country:

- a) political, social and economic history;
- b) culture;
- c) geography;
- d) flora and fauna;
- e) wildlife and heritage sites;
- f) sustainable tourism and tourism products;
- g) guiding techniques and skills;
- h) communication techniques (including cross cultural awareness or communication);
- i) group management techniques;
- j) customer care or service;
- k) guiding for persons with special needs;
- l) health and safety training including the attainment of a first aid or CPR certificate; and
- m) foreign language training, depending on the needs of the particular country.

5.2 Tour guides should update and upgrade regularly, guiding skills and knowledge on tourism, cultural and environmental matters through training and professional development activities.

5.3 Tour guides should attend first aid refresher courses, at least every two years.

5.4 Where tours are to be offered in a foreign language, tour guides should have received a certificate or show proof of knowledge of the foreign language as recognised by the national competent authority.

6 Appearance

The tour guide is a service provider who should:

- a) be appropriately attired for the type of tour being conducted;
- b) be clean, tidy and well groomed whilst on duty;

- c) ensure that good personal hygiene practices are observed at all times; and
- d) wear proper identification at all times; and

EXAMPLE Use of a uniform and badge

- e) be professional at all times.

7 Conduct

The tour guide should:

- a) be hospitable and maintain good, courteous conduct at all times;
- b) be capable of expressing himself or herself clearly in the language required by the tour party;
- c) not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or any other intoxicating substances prior to and or during the tour;
- d) demonstrate professional and ethical behaviour at all times;
- e) not solicit tips from tourists, but may accept tips or gratuities voluntarily provided by tourists;
- f) avoid situations which may lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest such as accepting rebates or commissions as an inducement to, or reward for, recommending patrons to a particular business entity or, altering the itinerary to gain some monetary reward;
- g) refrain from using inappropriate language and engaging in behaviour that may be offensive to members of the tour party;
- h) respect the cultural differences and individual views and beliefs of the tourists so as to avoid confrontation with members of the tour party;
- i) remain calm in difficult circumstances;
- j) obey the laws, regulations, customs and traditions of the country and encourage visitors to do the same;
- k) avoid encouraging tour participants to shop at businesses which pay a commission to tour guides while neglecting the itinerary;
- l) avoid recommending people or places of doubtful reputation;
- m) treat all tour participants with equal time, attention and dignity; and
- n) refrain from making negative remarks about the integrity, character, physical or trading environment and tours of other service providers.

8 Insurance

8.1 Tour guides contracted to tour operators should be covered by employee insurance or the established insurance coverage of that company, in accordance with the requirements of the law.

8.2 Independent tour guides should have the relevant insurance coverage.

9 Equipment

The tour guide should:

- a) ensure that all equipment to be used on the tour is in proper working order;
- b) be competent in the use of the equipment to be used on the tour;
- c) have an effective means of communicating with a responsible third party;

EXAMPLE Portable radios, cell phones, flares or other means of attracting attention

- d) thoroughly examine all equipment for apparent defects prior to use on the tour; and

EXAMPLE Check first aid kit for any damaged or expired items

- e) ensure that the relevant safety equipment provided is utilised throughout the tour.

EXAMPLE The use of life jackets when the tour party is on a floating craft

10 Pre-tour preparation

The tour guide should:

- a) research or review material for the tour to ensure that facts and information of the tourist attraction are current and relevant;
- b) be aware of the tour party profile which may include the gender, age group, physical disabilities, special requirements and language capability, in order to sufficiently prepare for or anticipate their needs;

NOTE This includes information on physical abilities and medical conditions such as allergies.

- c) tailor the presentation of the tour to suit the tour party;
- d) check communication and safety equipment to ensure proper functioning and be familiar with their use;
- e) verify where possible, if the route intended for the tour is suitable for passage;
- f) be familiar with alternate routes in the event that the original intended path is inaccessible;
- g) verify with the tour operator that all arrangements for the tour have been put in place;

EXAMPLE For hiking tours, the local police service could be notified of the proposed departure and arrival times and the intended route

- h) ensure that the first aid kit is complete, contains no defective or expired items and is easily accessible; and
- i) communicate with the driver of the tour party or the respective attraction or host of the scheduled activity to ensure that everything is in order prior to the departure of the group.

11 Reception and departure for tour

11.1 The tour guide should arrive well before the scheduled arrival of the tour party in order to make the necessary preparation for the tour.

11.2 The tour guide should direct the tour party to a strategic assembly point upon the arrival of the group. After securing the attention of all the members of the tour party, the tour guide should:

- a) formally welcome the tour party and conduct introductions;
- b) verify the number and or names of individuals in the tour party;
- c) determine any special (medical or dietary) requirements, concerns or restrictions of the individuals of the tour party with respect to the organized tour;
- d) briefly describe the tour and inform the tour party of any known changes from the anticipated itinerary;
- e) alert the tour party of fragile environments and the ways to avoid negative impacts;
- f) advise the tour party about any regulations or rules regarding the tourist attraction to be visited;
- g) inform the tour party about the conditions of the tour, level of difficulty, expected climatic conditions, and anything else associated with the tour that requires special attention;
- h) inform the tour party about appropriate action in the event of an injury or a member being separated from the rest of the tour party; and
- i) demonstrate the use of relevant safety equipment.

12 Conducting the tour

12.1 The tour guide should be responsible for the tour and is expected to provide accurate information, interpretation, and directions to and from items and places of interest.

12.2 When presenting the information, the tour guide should:

- a) speak clearly and audibly when describing or answering questions, avoiding the use of slang or local expressions unless their meaning is explained in the language of the tour;
- b) use educational aids where available, including guide books, brochures and illustrations;
- c) identify washrooms, concession booths and stores where available; and
- d) immediately notify the tour operator and tour party if the itinerary cannot be fulfilled.

12.3 The tour guide should be able to provide the tour party with, or direct them to relevant sources for further information.

12.4 The tour guide should ensure that safety equipment and a first aid kit is readily accessible on the tour.

12.5 The tour guide should be medically and physically able to perform any strenuous activity required by the type of tour being offered.

12.6 The tour guide should periodically check to determine that all members of the tour party are present and accounted for, especially at the end of every scheduled stop.

12.7 The tour guide should communicate with the contact person at the attraction, host of the activity or fellow tour guide in sufficient time to allow for any final provisions or amendments to the tour itinerary.

13 Difficult situations

13.1 The tour guide should be guided by the approved contingency plan for dealing with unexpected events such as the following:

- a) sick or injured members of the tour party;
- b) missing or lost members of the tour party;
- c) lost items;
- d) disruptive or undesirable behaviour from one or more members of the tour party;
- e) adverse weather conditions and natural disasters;
- f) mechanical failures;
- g) accidents, injuries and emergencies; and
- h) incidences or breaches which may pose a threat to the security of the tour party.

13.2 The tour guide, as part of the contingency plan, should be knowledgeable about the relevant support and emergency facilities including their location and contact information.

13.3 The tour guide should report to the tour operator on all difficult situations which affect the safety, comfort and enjoyment of the tour party and staff.

13.4 The tour guide should be able to implement all measures of the contingency plan.

14 Post-tour activities

At the end of the tour, the tour guide should:

- a) guide the tour party back to the starting point or other prearranged location;
- b) ensure that all members of the tour party are present and accounted for;
- c) thank the members of the tour party for their participation in the tour;
- d) inform the tour party of other tours and or attractions;
- e) follow up on any information promised to the members of the tour party; and
- f) offer assistance in coordinating or arranging any other requirements of the tour party which may be separately billed by the chosen supplier.

EXAMPLE Transport to another attraction or restaurant

15 Post-tour evaluation

In the interest of continuous improvement, the tour guide should:

- a) distribute tour evaluation forms to the tour party if required by the tour operator, collect at the end of the tour and use the information to improve the quality of the service provided;
- b) document any positive highlights of the tour, as well as, any problems or difficulties experienced and the action taken to resolve them; and
- c) report any issues experienced, both positive and negative, to the relevant agency for follow up action.

NOTE A log book is recommended for b) and c).

16 Complaints

16.1 A system should be implemented for dealing with customer complaints.

16.2 When faced with a complaint, the tour guide should be guided by the complaint management system of the operator and should:

- a) not admit liability until details and implications are known;
- b) document the complaint;
- c) select, implement and document an appropriate solution aimed at addressing the tour party's complaint or rectifying the relevant procedure or process;
- d) where possible, follow up and deal with the complaint in a timely manner; and
- e) monitor the corrective action to avoid recurrence of the complaint.

16.3 Where a complaint cannot be rectified by the tour operator and tour party member, the tour party member shall be directed to the relevant authorities to lodge the complaint.

17 Record keeping

The tour guide should maintain records on the following:

- a) medical examinations;
- b) first aid training;
- c) other types of training;
- d) maintenance of equipment; and
- e) reports.

EXAMPLE First aid replenishment kit record, tour evaluation reports and any other reports deemed relevant to the operations

NOTE A log book is recommended.

Annex A
(informative)

Code of guiding practice

It is recommended that the tour guide be cognizant of the Code of Guiding Practice as outlined by the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA) as follows:

- a) To provide a professional service to visitors, be professional in care and commitment and professional in providing an objective understanding of the place visited, free from prejudice or propaganda.
- b) To ensure that as far as possible what is presented as fact is true and that a clear distinction is made between this truth and stories, legends, traditions or opinions.
- c) To act fairly and reasonably in all dealings with all those who engage the services of guides and with colleagues working in all aspects of tourism.
- d) To protect the reputation of tourism in our country by making every endeavour to ensure that guided groups treat with respect the environment, wildlife, sights and monuments and also local customs and sensitivities.
- e) As representatives of the host country, to welcome visitors and act in such a way as to bring credit to the country visited and promote it as a tourist destination.

End of document



CARICOM REGIONAL ORGANISATION FOR STANDARDS AND QUALITY

The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) was created as an Inter-Governmental Organisation by the signing of an agreement among fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CROSQ is the regional centre for promoting efficiency and competitive production in goods and services, through the process of standardization and the verification of quality. It is the successor to the Caribbean Common Market Standards Council (CCMSC), and supports the CARICOM mandate in the expansion of intra-regional and extra-regional trade in goods and services.

CROSQ is mandated to represent the interest of the region in international and hemispheric standards work, to promote the harmonization of metrology systems and standards, and to increase the pace of development of regional standards for the sustainable production of goods and services in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and the enhancement of social and economic development.

CROSQ VISION:

The premier CARICOM organisation for the development and promotion of an Internationally Recognised Regional Quality Infrastructure; and for international and regional harmonized CARICOM Metrology, Standards, Inspection, Testing and Quality Infrastructure

CROSQ MISSION:

The promotion and development of standards and standards related activities to facilitate international competitiveness and the sustainable production of goods and services within the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) for the enhancement of social and economic development



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