



MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2021 - 002

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE ACCREDITATION OF TOUR GUIDES

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 5 of Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9593 or the *Tourism Act of 2009*, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is the primary planning, programming, coordinating, implementing and regulatory government agency in the development and promotion of the tourism industry, both domestic and international, in coordination with attached agencies and other government instrumentalities;

WHEREAS, R.A. No. 9593 also provides that the DOT is mandated to formulate and promulgate rules, and regulations governing the operation and activities of all tourism enterprises, including but not limited to a national standard for licensing, accreditation, and classification of tourism enterprises, prescribing therein minimum levels of operating quality and efficiency for their operation in accordance with recognized international standards;

WHEREAS, under R.A. No. 9593, Tourism enterprises refer to facilities, services, and attractions involved in tourism, such as Tour Guide services;

WHEREAS, on 20 April 1992, the DOT issued the *Rules and Regulations to Govern the Accreditation of Travel and Tour Services*, which provided for the requirements for accreditation of Tour Guides;

WHEREAS, to reinforce the invaluable role of Tour Guides in the tourism industry and to facilitate tourism competitiveness through training and enhancement of skills, there is a need to strengthen the accreditation of Tour Guides;

NOW THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, these Rules and Regulations Governing the Accreditation of Tour Guides are hereby issued:

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Circular, the term:

- (a) **“Accreditation”** refers to a certification issued by the Department to a tourism enterprise that officially recognizes it as having complied with the minimum standards for the operation of tourism facilities and services.
- (b) **“Cancellation”** refers to the penalty of removal of the rights and benefits of accreditation with no right to reapply.
- (c) **“Community Tour Guides Training”** refers to a DOT training program for tour guides residing in a local community to cultivate their skills and competencies for the development and promotion of sustainable community-based tourism, provision of quality service to tourists and employment generation.
- (d) **“Department”** refers to the Department of Tourism.
- (e) **“Professional Tour Guide Qualification Examination or PTGQualEx”** shall refer to the national qualification examination for aspiring professional Tour Guides which consists of a three-part assessment to be administered by the DOT:

1. Panel interview;
 2. Written examination; and
 3. Mock tour
- (f) **“Revocation”** refers to the removal of the rights and benefits of accreditation with a right to reapply once the period of revocation is lifted.
- (g) **“Suspension”** refers to temporary withholding of accreditation for three (3) months to one (1) year, as a result of non-conformance with any of the provisions of this Circular or commission of the prohibited Acts enumerated under Sections 22 and 23.
- (h) **“Tour Guide”** refers to an individual with specific area qualification who leads tour groups or individual visitors through a particular attraction, activity, site, or destination and provides interesting or enlightening facts and information or interpretation, for a fee, commission, or any other form of lawful remuneration.
- (i) **“Tour Guide Level”** refers to the level and/or rank of an accredited Regional or Community Tour Guide which shall serve as an indicator of the Tour Guide’s expertise and experience in the industry.
- (j) **“Tour Escort/Coordinator/Facilitator”** refers to an individual who accompanies tourists or tour groups to ensure the smooth conduct of planned trips, and provides the necessary support services to the group, but whose functions shall be limited as those stated in Section 20 (c) hereof.

II. CLASSIFICATION AND LEVELS OF TOUR GUIDES

Section 2. Classification of Tour Guides. DOT-Accredited Tour Guides shall be classified as follows:

- A. **“Specialist Tour Guide”** refers to an individual who exhibits technical expertise and knowledge in a specific field of interest or activity, as certified by a tourism association, government or private institutions, and who is allowed to guide or lead tour groups in any part of the Philippines within his/her scope of expertise.
- B. **“Regional Tour Guide”** refers to an individual guiding within a region where s/he has been issued DOT accreditation, and is further classified as follows:
1. **“Regular Regional Tour Guide”** refers to an entry level Regional Tour Guide who has met the minimum requirements for DOT accreditation, including passing the PTGQualEx, or an accredited Tour Guide prior to the implementation of this Circular.
 2. **“Master Regional Tour Guide”** refers to a Regional Tour Guide who has rendered at least ten (10) consecutive years as DOT-accredited Regional Tour Guide and has proven his/her expertise and experience in conducting tours, making him/her eligible as a resource person or lecturer for tour guiding trainings.
- C. **“Community Tour Guide”** refers to an individual who performs tour guiding within a particular site, attraction, and/or specific activities in a community or locality where he/she has been issued DOT Accreditation.
1. **“Regular Community Tour Guide”** refers to a Community Tour Guide who has met the minimum requirements for DOT accreditation, including completion of the

Community Tour Guides Training, or an accredited Community Tour Guide prior to the implementation of this Circular.

2. **“Master Community Tour Guide”** refers to a Community Tour Guide who has rendered at least two (2) consecutive accreditation periods as DOT-accredited Community Tour Guide and who has proven his/her expertise and experience in tour guiding within a particular site, attraction, and/or specific activities in a community.

Section 3. Upgrading of Classification. Regional Tour Guides (Regular or Master) may apply as Specialist Tour Guides, subject to compliance with the requirements under Section 7 (A). Community Tour Guides (Regular or Master) may apply as Specialist Tour Guides or Regular Regional Tour Guides, subject to compliance with the requirements under Section 7 (A) or Section 7 (B) respectively.

Section 4. Dual Accreditation. DOT-accredited Tour Guides may apply for and simultaneously hold a Regional Tour Guide and a Specialist Tour Guide accreditation, subject to compliance with the requirements of both classifications and payment of corresponding accreditation fees to the appropriate offices. However, only those who were granted Specialist Tour Guide Accreditation are allowed to cross regions to conduct tours on their field of specialization.

III. REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION OF TOUR GUIDES

Section 5. Eligibility for Accreditation. An applicant for accreditation as a Tour Guide must comply with the following:

- A. Nationality – Filipino citizen or a permanent resident alien
- B. Educational Background
 1. Specialist Tour Guides – should have completed a college degree.
 2. Regional Tour Guides – should have completed the Senior High Program, or prior to the implementation of the K-12 Program, completed at least second year college or a two-year vocational course.
 3. Community Tour Guides – Formal education is not required
- C. At least eighteen (18) years of age
- D. Physically fit
- E. Language Proficiency:
 1. Specialist Tour Guides – proficient in English and preferably speaking another foreign language.
 2. Regional Tour Guides – proficient in English.
 3. Community Tour Guides – conversant in English.
- F. Must not have been found liable in any complaint filed with the DOT by a stakeholder or tourist relative to tour guiding activities.
- G. Must not have been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude by a court of law.

Section 6. Training Requirements for Tour Guide Accreditation. An individual who seeks DOT accreditation as a Tour Guide must attend and pass the required training course from any of the following:

- A. Specialist and Regional Tour Guide

Institution	Training	Proof of Completion
TESDA Accredited Institution	At least NC-II Tour Guiding	Applicable TESDA National Certification

Institution	Training	Proof of Completion
CHED Accredited Higher Education Institution (CHED-HEI)	At least Three Units of Tour Guiding Course	Transcript of Record ¹
DEPED Accredited School	Technical Vocational (Tour Guiding Course)	Transcript of Record (Form 137a)
DOT / DOT-Accredited Training Center / Institution	Regional Tour Guiding Course	Certificate of Training

B. Community Tour Guides

Institution	Training	Proof of Completion
DOT Office of Industry Manpower Development	Community Guiding Course	Certificate of Training

Section 7. Requirements for New Application for Accreditation. For the purpose of new applications for Accreditation, the following documents must be submitted by the applicant:

A. Specialist Tour Guides. The following documentary requirements shall be submitted to the DOT Office of Tourism Standards and Regulation – Standards Monitoring and Enforcement Division (OTSR-SMED):

1. Letter of intent to apply as a Specialist Tour Guide;
2. Certification issued by a tourism association, government, or private institution, pertaining to the applicant's technical expertise and knowledge of the specific activity/specialization;
3. DOT Certification that he/she passed the Professional Tour Guide Qualifications Examination (PTGQualEx), except those who have been accredited prior to the implementation of this Circular;
4. DOT Certification that applicant has passed the Validation Interview;
5. Photocopy of College Degree Diploma;
6. Valid Occupational/Work Permit issued by the Local Government Unit (LGU) where he/she resides;
7. Valid NBI Clearance;
8. Valid Health Certificate issued by a government physician stating that the applicant is physically fit to work;
9. Negative drug test result conducted by a government-accredited drug testing laboratory;
10. Valid Certificate of Training on Basic First-aid or Basic Life Support, if the applicant did not undergo Tour Guiding Training with DOT or a DOT-Accredited institution;
11. Certificate of Training on Filipino Brand of Service or its equivalent conducted by DOT; and
12. Portfolio of credentials on field of specialization or expertise.

B. Regular Regional Tour Guides. The following documentary requirements shall be submitted to the DOT Regional Office with jurisdiction over the region where the Tour Guide renders services:

1. DOT Certification that he/she passed the Professional Tour Guide Qualifications Examination (PTGQualEx);
2. Valid Occupational/Work Permit issued by the LGU where he/she resides;

¹ The DOT shall not consider the CHED HEI-issued Transcript of Record if the completed Tour Guiding Course by the applicant is integrated with a travel and tours subject or any other subject.

3. Valid NBI Clearance;
4. Valid Health Certificate issued by a government physician stating that the applicant is physically fit to work;
5. Negative drug test result conducted by a government-accredited drug testing laboratory; and
6. Valid Certificate of Training on Basic First-aid / Basic Life Support, if the applicant did not undergo Tour Guiding Training with DOT or DOT-accredited institution;

C. **Master Regional Tour Guides.** The following documentary requirements shall be submitted to the DOT Regional Office with jurisdiction over the region where the Tour Guide renders services:

1. Letter of intent to upgrade level of classification from Regular Regional Tour Guide to Master Regional Tour Guide;
2. Proof of having been a DOT-Accredited Regional Tour Guide for at least ten (10) consecutive years;
3. Commendation or proof of superior guiding performance from any association of DOT-Accredited travel and tour agencies, tourism council, and other tourism-related organizations excluding Tour Guide associations; and
4. Certificate of Training on Filipino Brand of Service or its equivalent conducted by DOT.
5. DOT Certification that he/she passed the Professional Tour Guide Qualifications Examination (PTGQualEx), except when the Master Regional Tour Guide Applicant has been accredited prior to the implementation of this Circular;
6. Valid Occupational/Work Permit issued by the LGU where he/she resides;
7. Valid NBI Clearance;
8. Valid Health Certificate issued by a government physician stating that the applicant is physically fit to work;
9. Negative drug test result conducted by a government-accredited drug testing laboratory;
10. Valid Certificate of Training on Basic First-aid / Basic Life Support, if the applicant did not undergo Tour Guiding Training with DOT or DOT-accredited institution;

D. **Regular Community Tour Guides.** The following documentary requirements shall be submitted to the DOT Regional Office with jurisdiction over the region where the Tour Guide renders services:

1. Valid Barangay Clearance;
2. Valid Health Certificate issued by a government physician stating that the applicant is physically fit to work;
3. Negative drug test result conducted by a government-accredited drug testing laboratory; and
4. Certificate of completion of Community Guides Training conducted by DOT.

Local government units requesting for DOT's Community Tour Guides Training shall facilitate the required medical examination and issuance of health certificate, as well as drug testing of community guides who passed the training.

E. **Master Community Tour Guides.** The following documentary requirements shall be submitted to the DOT Regional Office with jurisdiction over the region where the Tour Guide renders services:

1. Letter of Application to upgrade level classification from Regular Community Tour Guide to Master Community Tour Guide;
2. Proof of having at least two (2) consecutive accreditation periods as a DOT-Accredited Community Tour Guide;
3. Commendation or proof of superior guiding performance from any association of DOT-accredited travel and tour agencies, tourism council, and other tourism-related organizations excluding Tour Guide associations;
4. Certificate of Training on Filipino Brand of Service or its equivalent conducted by DOT.
5. Valid Barangay Clearance;
6. Valid Health Certificate issued by a government physician stating that the applicant is physically fit to work;
7. Negative drug test result conducted by a government-accredited drug testing laboratory;

Section 8. Requirements for Permanent Resident Alien. In addition to the requirements stated in Section 7, a permanent resident alien applicant shall submit the following documents:

- A. Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR I-Card);
- B. Valid Permanent Resident Visa or Immigrant Visa issued by the Bureau of Immigration, or Retiree's Visa by the Philippine Retirement Authority;
- C. Alien Employment Permit, if a Retiree's Visa Holder.

Section 9. Recognition of Prior Learning. A Certificate of Recognition of Prior Learning from the DOT Office of Industry Manpower Development (OIMD) may be submitted by a Tour Guide applicant in place of the documentary requirements stated in Section 6 hereof.

Section 10. Requirements for Renewal. Upon filing an application for renewal, the following documents must be submitted by the applicant:

A. Specialist Tour Guides

1. Valid Occupational/Work Permit issued by the LGU where he/she resides;
2. Valid NBI Clearance;
3. Valid Health Certificate issued by a government physician stating that the applicant is physically fit to work;
4. Valid Certificate of Training on Basic First-aid and / or Advanced First-aid / Basic Life Support conferred by DOT, Philippine Coast Guard or DOLE Recognized Training Providers (Department of Health (DOH), Philippine Red Cross (PRC), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
5. Proof of completion of a 40-hour tourism-related course conducted by DOT, tourism associations and organizations, DOT-accredited training centers, TESDA, academe, concerned LGUs or other government agencies, completed within the last three (3) years.

B. Regional Tour Guides

1. Valid Occupational/Work Permit issued by the LGU where he/she resides;
2. Valid NBI Clearance;
3. Valid Health Certificate issued by a government physician stating that the applicant is physically fit to work;
4. Valid Certificate of Training on Basic First-aid / and / or Advanced First-aid / Basic Life Support conferred by DOT, Philippine Coast Guard or DOLE Recognized Training Providers (Department of Health (DOH), Philippine Red Cross (PRC),

Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);

5. For Regular Regional Tour Guides, proof of completion of a 20-hour tourism-related course conducted by DOT, tourism associations and organizations, DOT-accredited training centers, TESDA, academe, concerned LGUs or other government agencies, completed within the last two (2) years.
6. For Master Regional Tour Guides, proof of completion of a 40-hour tourism-related course conducted by DOT, tourism associations and organizations, DOT-accredited training centers, TESDA, academe, concerned LGUs or other government agencies, completed within the last three (3) years.

C. Community Tour Guides

1. Valid Barangay Clearance;
2. Valid Health Certificate issued by a government physician stating that the applicant is physically fit to work;
3. Valid Certificate of Training on Basic First-aid, Advanced First-aid, or Basic Life Support conferred by DOT, Philippine Coast Guard or DOLE Recognized Training Providers (DOH, PRC, BFP and TESDA);
4. For Regular Community Tour Guides, proof of completion of a 20-hour tourism-related course conducted by DOT, tourism associations and organizations, DOT-accredited training centers, TESDA, academe, concerned LGUs or other government agencies, completed within the last two (2) years.
5. For Master Community Tour Guides, proof of completion of a 40-hour tourism-related course conducted by DOT, tourism associations and organizations, DOT-accredited training centers, TESDA, academe, concerned LGUs or other government agencies, completed within the last three (3) years.

Section 11. Continuing Requirements for Accreditation. Occupational Permits are considered continuing requirements in view of their limited validity. Thus, accredited Regional and Specialist Tour Guides shall submit a valid Occupational Permit annually to the office that granted their accreditation.

IV. FEES, CHARGES, AND PENALTIES

Section 12. Fees. Applicants shall pay the following accreditation and miscellaneous fees, as may be applicable:

Tour Guide Category	Accreditation Fee
Specialist Tour Guide	Php 1,500.00
Regional Tour Guide	Php 1,000.00
Community Tour Guide	Php 500.00
Miscellaneous Fees	
Replacement of Lost/Damaged Certificate and/or ID	Php 500.00

Section 13. Lost Certificate/ID. In case of lost or damaged accreditation certificate or ID card, Tour Guides shall be required to submit a Letter Request for Replacement of lost/damaged accreditation certificate and/or ID and a duly notarized Affidavit of Loss.

Section 14. Penalties for Late Renewal. A surcharge equivalent to twenty-five percent (25%) of the accreditation fee shall be collected for applications for renewal made after June 30 and a penalty of fifty percent (50%) for every succeeding year thereafter.²

² Sample Computation:

If renewing after the prescribed renewal period	In PHP
Accreditation Fee	1,000.00

V. VALIDITY OF ACCREDITATION; MONITORING OF TOUR GUIDES

Section 15. Validity of Accreditation. The periods of validity of accreditation are the following:

Tour Guide Category	Accreditation Validity
Specialist Tour Guide	Three (3) Years, ending every June 30
Regional Tour Guide	
• Regular Regional Tour Guide	Two (2) Years, ending every June 30
• Master Regional Tour Guide	Three (3) Years, ending every June 30
Community Tour Guide	
• Regular Community Tour Guide	Two (2) Years, ending every June 30
• Master Community Tour Guide	Three (3) Years, ending every June 30

Section 16. Application and Renewal Period. An application for accreditation may be filed on any working day in the year. Renewal of accreditation may be made from April 1 to June 30.

Application Period	Renewal Period
Any working day within the year	April 1 to June 30

Section 17. Non-Transferability of Accreditation. Accreditation and the rights and privileges thereunder are non-transferable.

Section 18. Non-renewal of Accreditation. Applications for renewal shall be made during the Renewal Period in accordance with Section 16 hereof. In case of failure to renew within such period, the following provisions shall apply:

- A. Specialist Tour Guides, Master Regional Tour Guides, and Master Community Tour Guides who submit their application for renewal within the following periods shall comply with the requirements below:

Period of Non-Renewal	Requirements
1 day to 6 years after expiration of accreditation	Submit proof of payment of penalties and surcharges
6 years and 1 day or more after expiry	Undergo and pass the PTGQualEx again If Master Community Guide, required to undergo Community Guides Training again

- B. Regular Regional Tour Guides and Regular Community Tour Guides who submit their application for renewal within the following periods shall comply with the following:

Period of Non-Renewal	Requirements
1 day to 4 years after expiry	Submit proof of payment of penalties and surcharges

Surcharge (25%)	250.00
TOTAL DUE	1,250.00

If renewing a year after the prescribed renewal period and every year thereafter	In PHP
Accreditation Fee	1,000.00
Surcharge (25%)	250.00
Penalty (50%) (multiplied by number of years)	500.00
TOTAL DUE	1,750.00

Period of Non-Renewal	Requirements
4 years and 1 day or more after expiry	Required to undergo and pass the PTGQualEx again If Regular Community Guide, required to undergo Community Guides Training again

Section 19. Issuance of Tourism / Travel Advisory. The Department shall publish advisories against Tour Guides found to have violated the terms of their accreditation, which shall contain the following details:

1. Name of the Tour Guide;
2. Location of accreditation, for Regional and Community Tour Guides;
3. The specific term or terms of accreditation violated; and
4. The statement that the advisory shall only be lifted upon proof of compliance of the Tour Guide with the terms of accreditation in an application for lifting of advisory submitted to the Regional Director.

Section 20. Monitoring and Coordination. As deemed necessary, monitoring of Tour Guides shall be conducted for the purpose of determining whether the Tour Guides comply with the rules and regulations set by the Department. Tour Guides are required to comply with the following:

- A. Regional Tour Guides are required to endorse and coordinate with Community Tour Guides, when applicable.
- B. Specialist Tour Guides are required to coordinate with the DOT Regional Office when guiding within their jurisdiction.
- C. Tour Escorts or Coordinators or Facilitators, as defined in this Circular, shall not in any way act as Tour Guides. Their function shall be limited to tour coordination, arrangement, or translating the narration of the services of DOT-accredited Tour Guides during the tour, whenever necessary.
- D. Tour Guides are required to wear their DOT accreditation ID during the conduct of tours.
- E. In the absence of a regional costume or uniform provided by the Tour Operator, Tour Guide Association and/or LGU, Tour Guides must wear appropriate clothing in accordance with the following prescribed Dress Code:
 - i. Polo Barong/Collared Shirt for Men
 - ii. Lady Barong/Blouse with sleeves or Collared Shirt for Women
 - iii. Slacks Pants for Men and Women / Knee-length skirt for Women
 - iv. Appropriate Attire for location such as beaches, mountains, etc.
 - v. Footwear appropriate for the attire and location (no rubber slippers)

VI. GROUNDS FOR DENIAL, SUSPENSION, CANCELLATION, OR REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION AND SCHEDULE OF FINES AND PENALTIES

Section 21. Schedule of Fines and Penalties. Pursuant to Section 39 of R.A. No. 9593, violation of, or non-compliance with, any of the provisions of this Circular, or commission of the acts enumerated under Section 22 and 23 shall be ground for the Denial, Suspension, Cancellation, or Revocation of accreditation of Tour Guides.

Section 22. Grounds for Denial of Applications for, or Renewal of, Accreditation. The Department may deny an application for, or renewal of, accreditation of Tour Guides on the following grounds:

- A. Making any false declaration or statement or making use of any such declaration or statement or any document containing the same or committing fraud or any act of misrepresentation for the purpose of obtaining accreditation;
- B. Failure to comply with the standards and requirements for accreditation;
- C. Failure to pay outstanding surcharges, fines, or penalties;
- D. A determinative finding of liability for complaint/s filed with DOT against the Tour Guide;
- E. Any other act or omission deemed to be detrimental to the tourism industry.

Section 23. Grounds for Suspension, Cancellation, and Revocation of Accreditation and Schedule of Fines and Penalties. The DOT, after due notice and hearing, may impose the following fines and penalties based on the following grounds:

GROUNDS/OFFENSES	FINES AND PENALTIES			
	1 st offense	2 nd offense	3 rd offense	4 th offense
a. Violation of the National Code of Ethics for Tour Guides (Annex A)	Stern warning and a fine of P1,500.00	Three (3) months suspension and a fine of P3,000.00	Revocation of accreditation and a fine of P6,000.00	Cancellation of accreditation
b. Unauthorized transfer and/or reproduction of Accreditation Certificate, ID, or any document issued by the DOT.	Stern warning and a fine of P1,500.00	Six (6) months suspension and a fine of P3,000.00	Revocation and a fine of P6,000.00	Cancellation of accreditation
c. Grave misconduct, discourtesy, dishonesty, and evident bad faith in dealing with clients.	Cancellation of accreditation	N/A	N/A	N/A
d. Organizing tours as a travel and tour operator without the appropriate DOT Accreditation and Mayor's/Business Permit to operate as such.	Three (3) months suspension and a fine of 3,000.00	Six (6) months suspension and a fine of P6,000.00	Revocation and a fine of P10,000.00	Cancellation of accreditation
e. Promotion, facilitation, or conduct of activities involving drug-related transactions or any form of exploitation of women or children, upon investigation and due diligence of DOT.	Cancellation of accreditation	N/A	N/A	N/A
f. Making any false declaration or statement or making use of such declaration or statement or any document containing the same or committing fraud or any act of misrepresentation to obtain the grant of accreditation.	Cancellation of accreditation	N/A	N/A	N/A
g. Violation of or non-compliance with any of the provision of these Rules,	Three (3) months suspension	Revocation and a fine of P5,000.00	Cancellation of accreditation	N/A

GROUNDS/OFFENSES	FINES AND PENALTIES			
	1 st offense	2 nd offense	3 rd offense	4 th offense
Orders, Circulars and other issuances issued by the Department.	and a fine of P3,000.00			
h. Violation of or non-compliance with any of the provision of the Rules, Orders, Circulars and other issuances issued by government agencies and/or local government units concerning tour guides.	Three (3) months suspension and a fine of P3,000.00	Revocation and a fine of P5,000.00	Cancellation of accreditation	N/A
i. Any other act or omission deemed to be detrimental to the tourism industry.	Stern warning and/or a fine of not less than P500.00 but not more than P3,000.00 based on the gravity of the offense	Three (3) months to one (1) year suspension and/or a fine of P3,000.00 but not more than P5,000.00 based on the gravity of the offense	Revocation or Cancellation of accreditation and/or a fine of P5,000.00 but not more than P10,000.00 based on the gravity of the offense	N/A

Section 24. Execution Pending Appeal. The Suspension, Revocation, or Cancellation shall be immediately executory on the date of receipt by the Tour Guide of the relevant notice, subject to an appeal to the Office of the Secretary within fifteen (15) days therefrom.

Section 25. Notice of Violation. The DOT shall likewise issue a Notice of Violation to the LGU concerned to recommend the Suspension, Revocation, or Cancellation of licenses/permits issued to the Tour Guide found to have violated the terms of his/her accreditation.

Section 26. Lifting of Suspension. Suspension of Tour Guides shall only be lifted upon serving the full term of the suspension order, and submission of a letter request for reinstatement of accreditation, with proof of settlement of complaints filed against him/her, if any, or proof of payment of any unpaid fines and penalties.

VII. TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

Section 27. Grace period for renewal of expired accreditation. These rules shall apply to Tour Guides whose accreditation expired and failed to renew the same prior to the implementation of this Circular:

- A. Tour guides whose accreditation expired on or after June 30, 2018 shall be given a grace period of six (6) months from the date of the implementation of this Circular within which to submit their application for renewal of accreditation, otherwise, they will be required to undergo PTGQualEx. Failure to pass the PTGQualEx will relegate their function to Tour Coordinators/Escorts or Facilitators as defined in this Circular and subject to the provisions of Section 20 (c).
 - i. The provisions of Section 10 pertaining to documentary requirements for renewal of accreditation shall be applicable.
 - ii. Tour guides falling under this provision shall be required to submit proof of payment of the Accreditation fee, without any penalty or surcharge.

- B. Tour Guides whose last accreditation expired prior to June 30, 2018 shall be treated as new applicants when they apply for accreditation upon implementation of this Circular, and shall comply with the requirements for new application as stated in Section 7 hereof.

Section 28. Grace Period for New Accreditation. Tour Guides who passed the PTGQualEx but failed to apply for initial accreditation shall be given one (1) year grace period to apply, reckoned from the official release or publication of the PTGQualEx result. In case of failure to apply within such grace period, the Tour Guide shall be required to retake PTGQualEx in the following examination cycle.

Section 29. Accreditation for Applications Received Prior to the PTGQualEx. Except for Community Tour Guides, Tour Guide applications received after the issuance of this Circular but prior to the implementation of the Philippine Tour Guide Qualification Examination (PTGQualEx), shall be issued a Regular Tour Guide Accreditation Certificate valid for two (2) years, upon compliance with all the documentary requirements for accreditation, indicated in Section 7 of this Circular. A Certificate of Training under Section 6 hereof in lieu of the PTGQualEx Certificate shall be submitted

Specialist Tour Guide and Master Regional Tour Guide Accreditation Certificates valid for three (3) years may also be issued upon expression of intent by the applicant (tour guides prior to the implementation of this Circular) to upgrade level classification and compliance with the corresponding requirements under Section 7 of this Circular. A Certificate of Training under Section 6 hereof in lieu of the PTGQualEx Certificate shall be submitted.

A Validation Interview by a panel composed of one (1) industry representative, one (1) specialization expert, and one (1) DOT representative shall be conducted for Specialist Tour Guide applicants whose applications are received after the issuance of this Circular but prior to the implementation of the PTGQualEx.

Section 30. Protection of Personal Information. Personal Information received or filed with the Department pursuant to the requirements of these rules shall be protected in accordance with Republic Act No. 10173 or the *Data Privacy Act of 2012*.

VIII. OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 31. Separability Clause. If any portion or provision of this Circular is declared null and void or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Section 32. Repealing Clause. All previous rules and regulations, circulars, orders, and other issuances issued by the Department which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Circular are hereby repealed and modified accordingly.

Section 33. Effectivity. This Memorandum Circular shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the Official Gazette. Let three (3) copies hereof be filed with the Office of National Administrative Register (ONAR) of the UP Law Center.

12 March 2021.




BERNADETTE ROMULO-PUYAT
Secretary



12



NATIONAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR PROFESSIONAL TOUR GUIDES¹

Tour Guides are required to observe the following standards of ethical conduct

I. Tour Guide and Clients

The professional tour guide's responsibility is to his / her clients and tourists. In providing services, the tour guide promotes an environment in which the human rights, values, customs, and spiritual beliefs of the individual, family, and community are respected. The tour guide ensures that a client or tourist receives sufficient and accurate information on which to base decisions or to develop understanding on the culture and environment of the destination. The tour guide holds in confidence, personal knowledge and information and uses judgement in sharing this information. The tour guide shares with society the responsibility for initiating and supporting action to meet the needs of the tourism industry.

II. Tour Guide and Practice

The tour guide carries personal responsibility and accountability for practice, and for maintaining competence by continual learning.

The tour guide maintains a standard of personal health such that the ability to provide service is not compromised. The tour guide uses judgement regarding self-competence when accepting and delegating responsibility. The tour guide at all times maintains standards of personal conduct which reflect well on the profession and enhance public confidence. The tour guide, in providing service, ensures that use of technology and scientific advances are compatible with the safety, dignity and rights of clients and tourists. The tour guide also shares responsibility to sustain and protect the cultural and natural environment from depletion, pollution, degradation, and destruction.

III. Tour Guide and the Profession

The tour guide assumes a major role in determining and implementing ethical standards of practice, management, research, and education. The tour guide is active in developing a core of research-based professional knowledge. The tour guide, acting through or with the professional organization, participates in creating and maintaining safe, equitable, and sustainable social and economic working conditions in the tour guiding industry.

IV. Tour Guide and Tourism Partners

The tour guide sustains a proactive relationship with co-workers and tourism stakeholders in tour guiding and tourism industry as a whole. The tour guide takes appropriate action to safeguard individuals, families, and communities when their interest and that of the local tourism industry is endangered or jeopardized by a co-worker or any other person.

The ***Code of Ethics for Professional Tour Guides*** is a guide for human action based on the tourism industry's values and needs. It will have meaning only as a living document if applied to the realities of the tour guiding industry in a dynamic and vast tourism industry. To achieve its purpose, the *Code* must be understood, internalized and used by tour guides in all aspects of their work.

In order to align with the best practices of the tour guiding industry in the Philippines and in the world, this Code is hereby adopted, to wit:

¹ Based on the National Code of Ethics for Professional Tour Guides adopted by the Philippine Federation of Professional Tour Guide Associations, Inc. on 22-23 July 2010.

1. A professional tour guide shall function within the scope of tour guiding practice as set forth in the laws, rules and regulations of the Republic of the Philippines.
2. A professional tour guide is expected to follow the rules and regulations and act accordingly in any or all the sites and facilities where he / she takes visitors.
3. A professional tour guide has a wide range of knowledge about the locality where he / she renders services, including its history and architecture, arts, cultural, political life, and local folklore. A professional tour guide keeps current on new information, seasonal events, tourism activities and other changes in the community. A professional tour guide knows how to filter information, engages in research and does not knowingly provide misinformation.
4. A professional tour guide knows and follows the policies of the company he represents. A professional tour guide does not attempt to divert to another person or company any business from the company that has presently hired him / her. All business-related transactions with the client should be made through the company. It is the guide's responsibility to inquire from the tour company regarding continued service with a repeat client. Loyalty for and to the tour company should be practiced during the entire tour.
5. A professional tour guide accepts each tour as a serious commitment and cancels only when absolutely necessary and provides as much advance notice as possible.
6. A professional tour guide does not solicit gratuities.
7. A professional tour guide does not force and impose tourists to patronize souvenir shops and other similar places for the main purpose of gaining commissions offered by the establishments to the guide; or abuse complimentary meal privileges offered by food establishments.
8. A professional tour guide maintains the confidentiality and privacy of client and tourist information, unless the client or tourist has consented through a properly executed release for the disclosure of any information.
9. A professional tour guide cooperates with other tour groups and maintains ethical and professional conduct at all times, cultivating a positive relationship with all colleagues and other tour suppliers of the company he / she represents.
10. A professional tour guide respects the intellectual property and copyrighted materials of other guides by not recording and / or using any material without permission or quoting it without attribution.
11. A professional tour guide provides a skilled presentation of knowledge, interprets and highlights significant information on the surroundings, and informs and maintains objectivity and enthusiasm in an engaging manner.
12. A professional tour guide is prepared for each tour when the itinerary is furnished in advance. He / she must know the guest/s relative background. A professional tour guide assumes responsibility for reporting on time, at a proper place and for meeting appointments and all schedules within the guide's control. A professional tour guide is sensitive to the interests and values of the tour group and refrains from sharing his or her personal views on controversial subjects such as sex, religion, and politics unless asked.

13. A professional tour guide maintains good personal hygiene and dresses appropriately depending on the nature of the tour or related activities.
14. A professional tour guide is knowledgeable on the best and safest routes for all tours. This includes familiarity and adherence to local laws of the tourist destination. A professional tour guide associates with the tour driver in a calm, polite, timely, and respectful manner.
15. A professional tour guide engages and invests in activities that will enhance his / her skill in the guiding practice including but not limited to, attending seminars and trainings, and continuing education programs for professional growth and development.
16. A professional tour guide adheres and advocates for sustainable tourism development, including but not limited to, the principles of waste management, protection of cultural properties and flora and fauna from illicit traffic, and protection and conservation of museum collection and heritage sites.
17. A professional tour guide supports the protection of women and children and does not condone or tolerate any unlawful tourism-related activities, like child labor, all forms of prostitution, pedophilia, and human trafficking.
18. A professional tour guide respects people from all walks of life and does not discriminate any client or tourist on any basis such as color, gender, ethnicity, nationality, physical challenge, and the like.