

## COVID-19 CHECKLIST FOR TOURIST GUIDES

In planning for the “New Normal” guides should re-evaluate each stage of the Customer Journey and consider what changes might be required in their usual practices. Guides meet visitors in various locations and take them on moving vehicle, site and walking tours. It is likely that there will be less coach tours in the immediate future but once the larger group industry opens up probably next year, extra safety and hygiene practices will still be necessary to give customers confidence that it is Good to Go!!

- **Prior to the Tour**

- Check the group numbers – is it feasible and within current government guidelines and tourism partners’ protocols. For walking tours, in normal circumstances, no more than 15 guests are advised per guide and most insurance specifies no more than 20. In this situation, numbers might have to be less because of the need for social distancing. Coaches are likely to be no more than 30% or 50% full. For current information on how many people from different households can meet outdoors and indoors check <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/your-guide-to-covid-regs.pdf>.
- Check the itinerary carefully to allow for current opening rules and advance ticket requirements. More time may be required as groups may have to be split into smaller numbers and specific arrival times are likely to be required.
- Liaise with the agent if applicable to check all is in order and whether whisper systems will be provided or apps will be used. Also check that they are contacting guests in advance to advise them what will be required and what to expect on the tour. Ask if face masks will be provided for guests (normally through the coach company).
- Check any seating plan for guests to allow for social distancing.
- Get a list of names and contact details if booking is direct.
- If taking direct bookings, or if you have direct contact with guests then you should contact the guests in advance to inform them what will be required and what to expect on the tour. This could be by SMS.
- Make arrangements for contactless payments where possible, including your own guiding fees.
- Check with all tourism partners to find out their current rules and protocols e.g. coach company; private hire company, drivers, attractions; sites; hotels; restaurants. All including coaches will have sanitizer at entrances/exits and guests must use this on entering and leaving.
- Check the location and availability of toilets, hand washing and hand sanitizing facilities.
- Prepare your own PPE, including masks, microphone covers, portable microphones as appropriate. If doing a walking tour, take sanitizer for guests.

- **Meet and Greet**

- Arrive early enough to check on protocols at the venue or with the coach driver, chauffeur and any DMC or Shorex officials.
- For coach tours check again how the coach will be loaded and any seating plan.
- Wash or sanitize hands and any equipment e.g. microphone you are using directly.
- Wear a mask according to your own risk assessment and government guidelines. Be aware that wearing a mask even if it is not required may give reassurance to guests.
- As guests arrive do not shake hands or come into physical contact.
- Maintain social distance and encourage guests to do the same.
- Assist with coach loading as agreed with the coach driver if appropriate. This will include all guests loading in a prescribed order and using hand sanitizer. Household groups may not be able to sit together.
- Masks are likely to be required and it would be advisable to have some disposable masks available free of charge – this would normally be the responsibility of the agent or coach company.
- Advise guests of enhanced safety and hygiene protocols during the tour and at any venues you will visit.
- Re-assure guests that their safety and wellbeing is your top priority.

- **During the tour**

- While walking ensure that social distance is maintained at all times.
- Sanitize or wash your own hands frequently.
- Wear a mask and use appropriate means for voice amplification. Projection of the voice is not advised.
- Avoid crowded areas: change your route if necessary.
- Call ahead to attractions, restaurants and other venues to advise of exact arrival time. You are likely to have a set arrival time which must be adhered to but, if anything unexpected happens, contact the venue immediately.
- On arrival at attractions, sites and other venues – remind guests of safety and hygiene protocols for the particular site.
- Check again entrance restrictions and advise guests of arrangements. Groups may have to be split.
- Disembark the coach in the order agreed with the driver. Guests should sanitize their hands, on disembarkation.
- Re-load the coach in the same order as before.

- **At the end of the tour**
  - Thank the guests for their support and cooperation.
  - Disembark the coach in the same way as before.
  - Guests are unlikely to want to handle cash so tips may be an issue. If they do want to leave cash tips have a hands-free pot they can be placed into and encourage increased handwashing or sanitizing. Cash left should also be sanitized for your own safety.
  - Debrief the tour with the agent if appropriate highlighting any issues or challenges that arose
  
- **Remember: Guiding Is FUN!!**

