



雪災顯示互助互諒精神 Generosity during snowstorms

根據《旅行代理商條例》，只有經營外遊或到港旅遊業務的旅行社，才需要成為議會會員和領取牌照。議會現在大約有四十家會員沒有牌照，這當中有些會員沒有經營上述兩種業務，因而無須領取牌照，也有些是正在申請牌照的。為免公眾人士不瞭解上述情況，議會早前在網站中特別註明，沒有牌照的會員不得經營外遊或到港旅遊業務。此外，議會還會不時巡查這些會員，以確保它們沒有違法經營這兩種業務。

今年初內地多個省市雪災，不僅令當地居民苦不堪言，也使經營內地團的會員大受損失。這次議會發出了一些關於取消旅行團的建議，首要考慮當然是旅客的安全。有些旅客可能抱怨未能成行，但天災並非人力所能控制，這些時候大家只能互相體諒。這次安排整體令人滿意，為此必須感謝旅客和會員雙方的包容和互諒。

中五學歷證明是旅遊保險代理的登記要求之一。鑒於有些同業未必能提出中五學歷證明，議會於是不住游說保險業監理處，終於保監處決定，在符合一定條件的情況下，這項要求可予豁免。由於這次豁免是僅只一次的，同業必須在今年四月三十日前，向保險代理登記委員會申請登記，或者遞交登記意向通知書(見「特稿」)。

香港旅遊發展局由二零零六年起推動「優質誠信香港遊」計劃，至今已在十個內地城市設置專櫃，並在去年底公佈了第一批合共三十九家「優質誠信香港遊」地接社。議會非常支持這項計劃，希望會員也大力支持(見「專題」)。

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According to the Travel Agents Ordinance, only those travel agents which carry on outbound or inbound travel business need to become TIC members and obtain a licence. The TIC now has about 40 members which do not have a licence; some of them do not carry on these two kinds of business and therefore do not need to have a licence, and some of them are applying for one. **To ensure the public understand the above situation, the TIC website has recently been modified to explicitly state that unlicensed members are not allowed to carry on outbound or inbound travel business.** Apart from that, the TIC will inspect those members from time to time so as to make sure that they will not illegally do these two kinds of business.

The heavy snowstorms on the mainland early this year have inflicted much suffering on residents of the many affected provinces and cities, and caused substantial losses to members operating mainland tours. **Some recommendations regarding tour cancellations were released by the TIC, which were, of course, made with the safety of travellers as its top priority.** Some travellers may gripe about their trips having been cancelled, but natural disasters are beyond the control of humans and mutual tolerance is thus called for on such occasions. The arrangements this time are on the whole satisfactory, and we must therefore thank the magnanimity and tolerance shown by both travellers and members.

Proof of Form 5 qualification is one of the requirements for registration as travel insurance agents. As some industry members may not be able to provide such proof, the TIC has repeatedly lobbied the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance, which finally agrees to grant a conditional waiver. **Since this is a one-off waiver, industry members must either apply to the Insurance Agents Registration Board for registration or file a notice of intention with it by 30 April 2008** (see "Feature").

The Quality and Honest Hong Kong Tour scheme launched by the Hong Kong Tourism Board in 2006 has seen dedicated counters set up in 10 mainland cities so far, and the first batch of 39 ground operators registered under the scheme was also announced in late 2007. The TIC is all for the scheme, and hopes members will also support it (see "Special Topic").

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