



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 Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons

Guide to Application¹

(with effect from 21 April 2022)

I. Introduction

The Government announced on 27 April 2021 that the Executive Council approved the resumption of conditional exemption for licensed travel agents to organise local group tours under the group gathering restrictions as stipulated in the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) starting from 29 April 2021. However, in view of the development of the COVID-19 epidemic, the Government tightened social distancing measures with effect from 7 January 2022, including the suspension of organising local group tours. As the epidemic gradually subsides, the Government announced phased relaxation of social distancing measures with effect from 21 April 2022, and, subject to public health and strict measures against the epidemic, to gradually resume the conditional exemption for licensed travel agents to organise local group tours.

II. Details of the Conditional Exemption

Conditions for the exemption for licensed travel agents to organise local group tours of not more than 100 persons

Licensed travel agents, irrespective of whether or not they were granted the conditional exemption to organise local group tours of not more than 100 persons before 21 April 2022, must **re-apply for the conditional exemption**². Travel agents must fulfil all the following conditions in order to be eligible for the granting of the conditional exemption to organise

¹ Note: This Guide to Application should be read with the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Application Form”, with particular attention paid to “Section B: Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Local Group Tours (for group tour of not more than 100 persons)” therein.

² Licensed travel agents need not re-register itineraries (with valid departure date(s)) which were registered before 21 April 2022, yet they must organise local group tours with registered itineraries only after getting fresh approval for conditional exemption.

local group tours of not more than 100 persons:

1. they must hold a valid travel agent's licence and register with the TIC; and
2. they must complete and sign the "Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Application Form" and undertake to enforce anti-epidemic measures in strict accordance with the "Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Local Group Tours (for group tour of not more than 100 persons)" contained therein in order that public health is not affected. If there is any change to the content of the "Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Local Group Tours (for group tour of not more than 100 persons)", the updated version will be published at the 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 local group tours of not more than 100 persons.
3. If registered licensed travel agents organise local group tours whose itineraries are not registered with the TIC, such local group tours are not covered by the exemption concerned, thus subject to the group gathering restrictions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G).
4. Licensed travel agents must register both themselves and each of the itineraries of their local group tours with the TIC in order to be granted the conditional exemption to organise local group tours of not more than 100 persons.
5. Licensed travel agents, when organising local group tours under the conditional exemption, must provide working staff accompanying and receiving the local group tours with the document of proof (either the original, or a copy or electronic file of the original) mentioned in paragraph 1 above in order to facilitate inspection by law-enforcement officers or the TIC's inspectors.
6. Licensed travel agents must retain the names and contact information of all working staff accompanying and/or receiving the local group tours (e.g. tourist guides, tour escorts, staff seeing off the groups, drivers of chartered tour coaches and crew of chartered ferries, etc), and must ensure that the relevant working staff have received three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine prior to receiving local group tours; 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, licensed travel agents must ensure that they 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), and have produced a negative test result of a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test for COVID-19 conducted within 7 days preceding the date on which the local group tour commences; and must ensure

that the relevant working staff have undergone a rapid antigen test for COVID-19 with a negative result and produce a negative result of the test to our travel agent before the relevant local group tour commences on the same day. They must keep the relevant vaccination record, negative test results and the specified declaration form submitted by the relevant working staff for 3 days (counting the day following which the tour commences) and request the relevant working staff to bring along the aforesaid relevant proof when receiving local group tours, so as to facilitate inspection and follow up by the relevant persons whenever necessary. TIC will conduct checking.

7. Licensed travel agents must ensure that all the local group tour participants have received COVID-19 vaccine(s) in accordance with the latest vaccination requirements under the Vaccine Pass³, unless he/she is aged below 5 or holding a valid medical certificate stating that he/she is unfit, on medical ground, to be administered with a COVID-19 vaccine. Licensed travel agents must also ensure that all the local group tour participants have undergone a rapid antigen test for COVID-19 with a negative result⁴ before the local group tour commences on the same day. Licensed travel agents must keep the document for confirming the negative results of participants for 3 days (counting the day following which the tour commences) for the purpose of random checking.

III. Application Procedures for Registration

1. Licensed travel agents which have participated in the “Spend-to-Redeem Free Tour” Programme of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and wish to :
 - ◆ register both the “Spend-to-Redeem Free Tour” itineraries and other local group tour itineraries in their application:

must submit the following documents to both the TIC (email address: exemption@tichk.org) and the HKTB (email address: tours@hktb.com) in the same email for registration:

- the completed and signed “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Application Form”;
- the finalised “Spend-to-Redeem Free Tour” itineraries (which must be in PDF format);
- the completed Excel file “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours: Itinerary Registration Form”; and
- the itineraries of local group tours (which must be in PDF format).

³ For details of the Vaccine Pass requirements, please visit the COVID-19 Thematic Website (<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/vaccine-pass.html>).

⁴ To fulfil this requirement, the working staff accompanying and/ or receiving the local group tours may request the local group tour participants to sign on a document confirming that they have undergone the tests and obtained negative results.

- ◆ register the “Spend-to-Redeem Free Tour” itineraries only in their application:

must submit the following documents to the HKTB (email address: tours@hktb.com) for registration:

- the completed and signed “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Application Form”; and
- the finalised “Spend-to-Redeem Free Tour” itineraries (which must be in PDF format).

The HKTB will, after preliminarily processing the applications, forward the application forms and itineraries to the TIC for vetting. The TIC will directly issue travel agents whose applications for exemption have been approved with a document of proof.

2. Licensed travel agents which have not participated in the “Spend-to-Redeem Free Tour” Programme must submit the following documents to the TIC (email address: exemption@tichk.org) for registration:
 - the completed and signed “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Application Form”;
 - the completed Excel file “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours: Itinerary Registration Form”;
 - the itineraries of local group tours (which must be in PDF format).
3. Except for the itineraries under the HKTB’s “Spend-to-Redeem Free Tour” Programme, the following information must be provided in the Excel file of the Itinerary Registration Form:
 - (1) the meeting point and time of each itinerary; and
 - (2) all the departure dates of each itinerary.
4. Licensed travel agents must register each of the itineraries of their local group tours before promotion.
5. The itineraries (including attractions, and transport/meals (if applicable)) of local group tours which are the same only need to be registered once.
6. After successful registration for the first time, licensed travel agents which intend to register new itineraries only need to email the Excel file of the Itinerary Registration Form and the new itineraries to the TIC for registration. However, the Itinerary Registration Form should be submitted to the TIC no more than once a day.
7. If licensed travel agents intend to revise their registered itineraries, the revised itineraries (which means the transport, attractions or meals of the itineraries are revised) should be regarded as new ones and then filed anew for registration.

8. Upon request by the TIC, 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.
9. The itineraries of local group tours which are successfully registered will be uploaded to the TIC website once on the afternoon of each working day. Only those itineraries which have been uploaded to the TIC website are regarded as having been registered with the TIC, thus enabling the licensed travel agents concerned to organise such local group tours.
10. If any registered itineraries of local group tours, despite having been registered, are found to be in violation of any requirements of this Guide to Application, the “Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Local Group Tours (for group tour of not more than 100 persons)” contained in the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Application Form” and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G), the registration of such itineraries will be revoked and such itineraries be removed from the TIC website, and the licensed travel agent concerned is not allowed to organise any local group tours whose itineraries have been revoked.

IV. Monitoring Measures

1. The TIC will dispatch inspectors to conduct unannounced spot checks and undercover actions in order to ensure that those local group tours organised by Applicants having been granted the conditional exemption to organise local group tours 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 local group tours having been registered will be uploaded to the TIC website in order for inspection by law-enforcement officers and members of the public.

V. Consequences of Violating Undertakings

1. If any local group tours organised under the conditional exemption are found by law-enforcement officers to be in violation of any anti-epidemic laws or regulations or by the TIC to be in violation of the requirements of this Guide to Application or the “Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Local Group Tours (for group tour of not more than 100 persons)” contained in the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Guide to Application”, the licensed travel agent concerned will not be allowed to organise local group tours under the conditional exemption for one month (counting from the day of notification of the violation concerned by the TIC).
2. In respect of any matters relating to local group tours as mentioned in this Guide to Application and the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise

Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Application Form”, the decision of the TIC is final.

VI. Points to note

1. If licensed travel agents have organised local group tours 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) if such local group tours meet all the GLIS requirements.
2. If any local group tours 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 the TIC to be in violation of the requirements of the “Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Local Group Tours (for group tour of not more than 100 persons)” contained in the “Conditional Exemption for Licensed Travel Agents to Organise Local Group Tours of not more than 100 persons: Application Form”, the local group tours in question will become ineligible for subsidies under the GLIS or the HKTB’s “Spend-to-Redeem Free Tour” Programme.
3. If travel agents later apply for cash incentives under the GLIS, the TIC will check whether the itineraries of the local group tours 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 Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G), they will be ineligible for the cash incentives.

VII. Enquiry

For enquiries, please contact the 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. The 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. The TIC reserves the final discretion and right to amend this Guide to Application without prior notice.
4. The TIC’s decision on accepting or rejecting any application is final.