

Tour Guide Training

Module 4: Tour Management

Participant Guide

Contents

Topic 1: Tour Preparation.....	5
1.1 Research the incoming group.....	5
1.2 General preparation	7
1.3 Understand who you are working for	7
Topic 2: Pre-departure Preparation	8
2.1 Prepare yourself	8
2.1.1 Checklist: Before leaving home.....	8
2.2 Handle arrivals.....	9
2.3 Handle Check-ins	10
2.4 Pre-departure checks	11
Topic 3: Conduct a Tour	12
3.1 Tour Briefings.....	12
3.1.1 Welcome	12
3.1.2 Introductions.....	12
3.1.3 Tour Information.....	15
3.1.4 General Tour Behaviour	16
3.1.5 Travel tips.....	16
3.1.6 Health, safety and security tips.....	17
3.1.7 Questions	18
3.1.8 Build rapport	18
3.2 Handle health, security and safety issues on tour	18
3.3 Counting participants	20
3.3.1 Find lost or late tour group members.....	21
3.4 Load tourists/passengers.....	22
3.5 Direct tourists to the first destination/activity.....	23
3.6 Build Rapport	23
3.7 The tour itinerary.....	24
3.7.1 Changes to itineraries	25
3.8 Provide on-going information	27
3.9 Walking tour techniques	28
3.9.1 Pace.....	28
3.9.2 Position	28

3.10	Provide extra information or help to tour members.....	29
3.11	Conclude (end) the tour.....	30
Topic 4:	Post-Tour Procedures	30
4.1	Customer Feedback	30
4.2	Handle check-outs	31
4.3	Handle departures.....	31
4.4	Tour forms and reports	31
Topic 5:	Working within the law	31
5.1	Employment contracts	31
5.1.1	Freelance.....	32
5.1.2	Employed	32
5.2	Your legal responsibilities as a guide.....	33
5.2.1	Duty of Care	33
5.2.2	Duty to Employer	34
5.3	Legal knowledge of Tour Guides	34
5.3.1	Tour Operator protocols	35
5.3.2	Terms and conditions of the tour	36
5.3.3	Tour Itinerary	36
5.3.4	Legal Requirements of tours.....	36
5.3.4.1	Laos laws	36
5.3.4.2	International Travel Law	37
5.4	Potential (possible) legal claims	37
5.5	Effect on the tour company.....	38

Activity 1: Tour Management Case Study

You are leading a 14-day tour of Laos. The tour group comes from Europe and the group is accompanied by a European tour leader. You will be working with this tour leader on the tour. You have never worked with this person before.

Tour Leadership: from the beginning of the tour there is confusion about who is responsible for what – for example, the daily briefings, for organizing the group, for arranging check ins, for talking to the group about local culture and customs. This is a very common situation and it is a very important one, as you know that both you and the tour leader will be working for tips and want to appear to be the leader of the group. The confusion between you and the tour leader creates tension/ problems between you that the tour members can see and feel.

Questions:

1. How could you fix the issue with the tour leader?
2. How could you have handled this situation better?

Tourist departs tour: on the very first night of the tour one of the members of the group ‘falls in love’ with a bar girl in Vientiane. He comes to you and says he wants to leave the group tour so that he can spend longer with the girl in Vientiane. He says that he wants a refund for unused services on the rest of the trip.

Question:

3. How would you handle the situation with the man who wants to leave the tour and get a refund?

Medical emergency: during the tour, a client collapses on the floor in a cold sweat. The client is a 40 year old lady, with a history of medical problems and major surgery. A heart attack is feared. The client is able to walk and communicate, but does not want to see a doctor. You have the rest of the group to look after, and you are not sure how to handle the situation.

Question:

4. How should you handle the medical emergency situation? You need to think about the needs of the sick tourist, the group, and of course the tour company.

Topic 1: Tour Preparation

There are a few things you need to do before a tour starts:

1. do a bit of research about the group;
2. update your knowledge on what the itinerary covers, and
3. pack what you need to take along.

1.1 Research the incoming group

Before your tour starts, find out as much as possible about your group. This will help you meet their needs and expectations and give them a fantastic tour.

What you need to find out	Why you need to know this
What are their special needs and interests	So you can give them information that they are interested in.
Does the group know each other – for example do they work together, belong to a club, etc..?	So you can create opportunities for them to get to know each other, or to spend time with their friends.
Where they are coming from – e.g. a neighbouring country	As part of a regional tour (which is likely the case) they would already have had some introduction to the region, so you can build on to their experiences.
Where are they going to next?	So you can talk about things that they will still experience or learn about at a later stage in the tour.
What they have already experienced	They may already know or have learned a lot about the regional culture. So you don't repeat anything that they have already heard as you will bore them. Give them new information – not something they have already heard from another guide.
What are their activity levels: fitness and health	They must be fit enough and be able to handle the heat. This is important if they are doing any activities like kayaking, cycling, etc.
Can they swim?	This is important if you will be doing any activities on water like a ferry to an island, kayaking, etc.
Are there any special needs in the group – e.g. special access (wheelchairs), vegetarians, allergies, medical conditions, etc.?	This will help you to manage risks on the tour and ensure that people are kept safe and ensure that specific arrangements are made, for example, vegetarian dishes, or have medical emergency procedures on-hand.
Any particular interests?	Examples might be food, history etc. So you can plan for these interests/ do research in advance

How to research your incoming tour group:

- 1. Briefing from Operations Manager:** ask the Operations Manager for the travel agent or DMC if there is anything you need to know about the incoming tour group. If there are any special needs or interests, your employer should be able to tell you about them.
- 2. Email:** you can email your tour members in advance of the tour, introduce yourself and ask if they have any special interests or needs on the tour.
- 3. Previous Tour Guide:** if the group is on a multi-country tour (more than one country), or if there are different guides doing different parts of the tour, contact the Tour Guide/s from the previous part/s of the tour. Ask them:
 - what the group is like: their group personality, any special interests or needs;
 - what they have already covered on the tour (so you don't repeat the same content); and
 - any issues or problems they might have had on the tour – like they are always late; there is one troublemaker in the group, etc.

Example of email:

Dear Ms Lisa Gordon-Davis

My name is Phet Panthavong and I will be your Trip Leader/ Tour Guide during your trip in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam for our 18 days together. I have been working for Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT) for 8 years and what I enjoy the most is the exciting travel, adventure and discovery programs with tourists.

Ms Lisa, I see that you are traveling as a single and wanted to ask you if you have any questions or concerns that I may be able to answer for you before you arrive.

1. What is the most important thing you want to get out of this trip?
2. Do you have any special interests?
3. Is there anything in particular/special you would like to see or do during your tour?

I can't promise anything but if there is anything I can do I will try my best to arrange it. Please could you email me with this information but please understand that as I am travelling a lot, I might not be able to respond before I see you in person on the trip.

Please visit our website www.oattravel.com for your detailed itinerary, information on our local currency, weather and what you should pack.

I will be at Bangkok Airport to coordinate your transfer with an OAT WELCOME BOARD at Gate 7 when you exit customs.

My cell phone number: +66 419 6600 90.

I look forward to welcoming you to the Ancient Kingdom of Indochina soon!

Warm regards,

Phet Panthavong

Trip Leader: The Ancient Kingdoms of Indochina

1.2 General preparation

There are a few things to check when you are booked to guide a tour/group.

- **What style of tour is it?** Is it a coach tour, a walking tour, a site tour, a tour of a museum or gallery, or of a religious or spiritual building?
- **Where did people start the tour?** In Laos? Earlier (at a departure airport in home country, or even over pre-departure drinks in the home country)
- **Have you delivered this specific tour before?** Do you know the itinerary of the tour? If you do, then go over all the contents again to be familiar with everything you will be doing. If not, then you will have to do some research, develop your commentaries and activities, and practice until you are totally comfortable to deliver it.

1.3 Understand who you are working for

You may be contracted by different Travel Agents or different Tour Operators. For each of these you tours, so you must:

- know the specific **itinerary** that they offer – these will be different from one operator to another, so you will have to double check the details;
- know what their **procedures, standards and expectations** are: what should you wear (livery), what documents should you be using, etc.;
- get a **group profile** in advance whenever possible; and
- **know where the tour group comes from.** Have they been together before or are they meeting for the first time? Do they work for the same company? Belong to the same organization or club?

Topic 2: Pre-departure Preparation

2.1 Prepare yourself

Before the tour starts, you have a few things that you will need to do:

1. Contact Booking Agent or Tour Operator to make sure that you have:

- contract information like your daily rate and expenses;
- cash advance, vouchers, etc.;
- the itinerary, with the pick-up location, destination and times;
- coach/vehicle confirmation;
- passenger count/ tour members' names;
- information about the group (group profile); nationality, age, religion, language, physical condition, allergies, medical conditions and any special diets.
- What you must wear (your **livery**)
- DICT permission.

What is 'livery': a special uniform worn by a member of a company

2. Research/Review Sites on Itinerary

Update your information, according to your group and itinerary:

- **roads:** what the conditions are like and if any roads are closed and you cannot use them (e.g. mud slides, roads washed away, etc.);
- **sites:** access, opening hours, when they close, special exhibitions, etc.;

Example: July 2015: some parts of Wat Haw Pra Kaew in Vientiane are closed. The main building is closed and tourists can only visit the gardens and outer area.

- **facilities:** restrooms, taxi stands, tourist information, hospitals, local restaurants and shopping;
- **content:** important information, anecdotes, stories, TVP's, themes and links; and the
- **environment:** weather, temperature and environmental conditions.

2.1.1 Checklist: Before leaving home

Double check a few things before you leave for the tour so that you plan for any problems or changes that may happen at the beginning of the tour:

- **dress** properly for the weather and in clean and neat livery for the tour;
- plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before the tour starts;
- carry some extra things in case your participants need it, like:

- sunscreen for tourists who forget it;
- a shawl to cover their shoulders for tourists who forget to do so (in order to enter religious sites);
- Royal D electrolyte drink; and
- toilet paper and hand soap.

Pack your tour information: be organised!

Before your leave for a tour, check that you have all you need with you, in a backpack or in a bag you can easily carry with you. Keep all your papers neatly in an accordion file.

Checklist:

✓	Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Itinerary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirmations for hotels/restaurants, rooming lists, entrance information
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vouchers or money for entrances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guide badge and license permit
<input type="checkbox"/>	Note book and pen (or a notes app on your cell phone)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Map(s)/ and or directions
<input type="checkbox"/>	(From your Activity file) pocket with information of site(s) Information: opening times, phone numbers, access, contact names, location of coach/vehicle parking, location of restroom
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobile phone
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water, snack, band aids, other general items – you may need, e.g. money
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flashlight (night tours)
<input type="checkbox"/>	A “Prop” like a sign with the group name, or a brightly coloured umbrella, or a flag that you can hold up high for everyone to easily see and follow, especially in a crowd
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food translation list, which will help people with dietary requirements/ allergies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any fliers or advertising you might have, of interesting events in town/ in the country which tourists might want to visit in their free time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency procedures “cheat sheet”
<input type="checkbox"/>	A list (in your phone and printed) of emergency medical and policy facilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	First aid kit (sometimes a requirement)

2.2 Handle arrivals

You often have to meet your group members at an airport or other transport centre like a bus station. If this is the case make sure you have arranged the following:

1. The exact place to meet: examples:

- a gate number; or
 - a specific place: the front entrance; the Tourism Information Centre; Trio Coffee shop, etc.
- 2. Arrivals:** check the flight/boat/ train arrival details and re-check the flight or bus number and the arrival time; and
- 3. Make sure that the participants know what to look for and how to identify you.** To make this easier you could do any of the following:
- use a welcome sign board so that people can see you when they leave customs; and/ or wear a name badge and introduce your name to the group.

Handle arrivals: greeting:

- offer your hand for a handshake;
- look people in the eye;
- say your name;
- ask how their flight was; and
- never turn your back on your tour group and walk away without telling them where you are going or how long you will be.

Handle arrivals: tips:

- know where the toilets are;
- know where to exchange money;
- know where to get a local sim card, and
- have extra toilet paper and soap to offer them in case these are not provided in the toilets;.

Arrivals: how tourists can find you:

- livery: wearing the company uniform
- flag: holding up a company flag
- board with company name; or
- board with tourist's name.

2.3 Handle Check-ins

You will often have to handle group check-ins at hotels. Here are some tips to help with this:

- **Call the hotel before you will arrive there to:**
 - let them know you are on your way so that check-in is as quick as possible and tourists don't need to wait around at reception;
 - give them your ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival;

- ask them to get seats ready for tourists to sit down when they arrive; and
- ask them to prepare the welcome drink.
- **When you arrive at the hotel:**
 - show tourists where they can sit and relax while you handle check-ins at the desk;
 - show tourists where the toilets are;
 - check tourists get a welcome drink;
 - get room keys from reception and give them to the tourists according to rooming list; and
 - tell tourists about hotel facilities e.g. pool, massage, breakfast room and time, etc.
- **Registration and check-in documents:**
 - speak to hotel to organise that the tourists don't need to fill in forms, or that they can do these after they get to their rooms; and
 - make sure Operations Manager or reservations staff from Tour Operator have provided all passport and personal details in advance to hotel, so these do not need to be provided on check-in. The Tour Operator will have this information and it is good service – the tourists then just need to sign in and not complete registration forms.
- do not leave the hotel as soon as tourists have gone to their rooms but stay at reception for 30 minutes in case you need to help if there are any issues with their rooms.
- Call tourists in rooms to check all is okay; and
- Leave your number with hotel reception staff.

2.4 Pre-departure checks

Before leaving for the tour in the vehicle, double check the following:

- **refreshments** are packed in the vehicle: drinks (water bottles, soda's, fruit juice) and snacks;
- **resources** you need for activities are packed in, e.g. things you need for a demonstration, safety equipment, etc..;
- **cold towels** in icebox;
- **first aid kit**;
- **information for tourists**; and
- **microphone system is set and working.**

Topic 3: Conduct a Tour

3.1 Tour Briefings

At the beginning of the tour you will present a tour briefing with the tour members. This gives you the chance to tell them a lot of things that they need to know about the tour, and to introduce everyone to each other.

The tour briefing usually includes the following points:

1. **welcome;**
2. **introductions:** you, the other team members and the tour members;
3. **tour information:** itinerary, inclusions and exclusions, handling changes;
4. **tour requirements:** being on time, changing seats;
5. **travel tips:** money, health and safety, tipping;
6. **documents:** any paperwork that needs to be handled; and
7. **questions:** any questions tourists may have – or any you may have.

Hold the briefing in a place where people can hear and see you well, and where they are comfortable. Many briefings take place at places like hotels, or could even be on a bus at the start of a short (day or overnight) tour.

3.1.1 Welcome

Your welcome is important as it will give the tour members the first taste of what quality to expect for the rest of the tour. Remember – you only have one chance to make a first impression. What you say and do will be remembered!

The welcome will also create an impression of the tour company you are working for – so it is important to get it right for the operators who are paying you. So, you will need to:

- Arrange a good place for briefing – usually at a hotel;
- get the group together;
- thank them for coming on the tour; and
- say the name of the tour so the tourists know they are on the right tour.

3.1.2 Introductions

- **Introduce yourself:** remember what you have learnt about how to introduce yourself and how much information to give about yourself. Be very clear about your role and what you can and cannot do on the tour.

Tell them that it is your job to make sure they have a great experience on the tour, and you will do your best to make this happen.

Give your phone number in case of any emergencies!

- **Introduce others to the group:** you will often work with other people on the tour, and these people have to be introduced to the group as well. These may include:
 - assistant Tour Guide;
 - vehicle driver;
 - interpreter;
 - demonstrator;
 - site expert; and
 - guest speaker;

Introductions depend on whether they can speak English or not. If they speak English, they can introduce themselves, once you have told the group who they are and why they are there. If they don't speak English, then you can say something about them to the group.

When introducing them, tell the tour members:

- their name;
- their role; and
- their experience/expertise or specialist knowledge

Example:

"This is (insert name). He will be our driver on this tour. He comes from Vientiane and has over 10 years of tourist driving experience. He has worked for Adventure Tours for 6 years, and knows the roads of Laos very well. We will be very safe in his hands."

- **Introduce tour members to each other:** it is important to encourage tour group members to get to know each other and make friends.

If your tour group members are part of a group that is on a regional tour and have come from another country like Thailand, Vietnam, or Cambodia, you won't need to introduce them to each other as they know one another already.

If you have a tour that is just starting you will have a group of people who are meeting for the first time. For really short tours like a site tour or a half-day city tour, doing long introductions will not be necessary. However, if they are going to spend a few days together, then introductions at the beginning of the tour will be very helpful to everyone.

These tips can help you:

- give each person a name badge to wear so that they can learn each other's names quickly;
- Do an "**icebreaker**" at the beginning of a tour for people to get to know each other briefly and quickly. These are quick exercises which can be used to 'break the ice' (make everyone comfortable with each other) and introduce tour group members to each other. Make sure there is enough time, and a suitable place to do this – standing in the hot sun is not a great place for an icebreaker. There are many ideas on how to do this:
 - ask them to walk around and find other tour members whose names start with the same letter that theirs does; or
 - if they are all from the same country, ask them to find other tour member who comes from the same province, state or region that they come from
- Each tour member can have a turn to introduce themselves and where they come from – which is especially interesting on a tour when they come from different countries.
- You can add an extra (ice-breaker) question that they can answer for fun like:
 - What is their hobby?
 - What was the last holiday they were on?
 - What is their favourite thing in the world?
 - What is the part of the tour itinerary they are most looking forward to?

These extra questions add some more interest, and give tourists something to talk about when they get to know each other. For example, if two or three different people had recently been to South America, they could chat about their experiences there as they have something in common.

Just ask one question – not a lot of them!

Examples: Hello, my name is...

"Linda Stevens, I come from Atlanta in the United States. My last holiday was to Jamaica in the Caribbean"

"George Jones, I come from London, England, and my hobby is cooking. I am really looking forward to trying out Lao food while I am on the tour, and maybe learning how to make some."

"Jurgen Schmidt, from Munich in Germany. I am really looking forward to the river tour and the kayaking, and of course the good Lao beer."

3.1.3 Tour Information

You need to confirm all the tour information with the tour members to make sure they understand what you will do, where you will go, and when you will do things.

You should say the following in your tour briefing:

- **confirm the itinerary** – maybe hand out copies; discuss the basic itinerary. Tell about any changes to the itinerary like routes, activities, and what is included;
- **confirm timing details** – like travel times, time allowed at stops, time for meals, departure time from hotel and the time they will get back to the drop-off point;
- **be prepared for changes:** explain that changes may happen because of local conditions, and if things change they will be told about it in good time. You will discuss the changes and the reasons for the changes. Changes will be made to make sure they are comfortable and to meet their special interests. Ask for their understanding, patience and sense of humour if things need to change at the last moment;
- **inclusions and exclusions:** be clear on what the tour includes and what it does not include. Examples include:
 - **meals:** for example – breakfast is included every day, but most other meals are excluded. Explain that this will give them a chance to try different local dishes, and you can help to give suggestions on where to eat and what to eat;
 - **drinks:** alcoholic drinks are excluded, but soft drinks are included in the meals that are part of the itinerary;
 - **entry tickets:** these are included in the tour; and/ or
 - **transport:** this is included from place to place, but if in free time the tour members want to travel in the town or city, this is for their own cost.
- **Manage expectations:**
 - Remind tourists that in Laos they cannot expect the same standards as in the West!
 - Brief them to expect a difference in:
 - service standards;
 - speed of service;
 - hotel quality;
 - language abilities in English; and how quickly people respond to them.
 - **Expect:** friendliness and gentle people.
- **hand out any items for the tour like:**
 - name badges and welcome kits;

- give and explain vouchers;
- give and explain information hand-outs and brochures; and
- fit tour members with safety equipment and/or clothing

3.1.4 General Tour Behaviour

These are the general rules of behaviour that will help everyone get along, and make sure that the tour goes well and members show respect for the culture of Laos. The types of things you could cover here are:

- **rules for the tour vehicle:**
 - **safety:** wear seat belts;
 - **rubbish:** put in a rubbish bag;
 - **take turns** in the front seat; and
 - **eating and drinking** in the vehicle – is this allowed or not?
- **general do's and don'ts:** any cultural guidelines on how to behave, like asking before taking photos, etc.

3.1.5 Travel tips

With travel tips you give general and useful information to tourists to make their visit easier. The kinds of tips to include are:

Money:

- **exchange rates:** convert local currency for the tourists (in relevant currencies e.g. USD, AUD, GBP, NZD, CAD as appropriate);
- **best places to:** change money, access to ATMs, where travellers cheques are accepted, if and where credit cards are used, etc.; and
- give an idea **how much they can expect to spend** every day for food.

Tips: give the tourists some general guidelines for tipping – like

- **tour staff:** to make this a simple process the guide will pass an envelope around before saying goodbye to a driver and/or guide (usually just before a flight or the end of the tour);
 - **restaurant staff:** staff appreciate a tip for good service. The amount can be up to 10%; and
 - **hotel staff:** room attendants and porters appreciate a small tip but it is not a must. Suggest an amount that is OK.
- **Being separated from the group:** there may be a time when a tourist becomes separated (away) from the group.

Separation from the tour group:

Tell the group what to do if someone gets separated from the main group. Ideas for handling this are:

- **go to a specific place** – like the main entrance, Visitor Information Centre, etc.;
- **call a given telephone number** – e.g. the cell phone of the Tour Guide; or
- **stay exactly where they are** when they realise they have become separated from the group: the Tour Leader can go back to find them.

3.1.6 Health, safety and security tips

Health issues

When you talk about **health issues**, mention the following:

- drink **bottled water** only (never drink water from the tap);
- drink lots of water or electrolyte drinks so that they don't get dehydrated;
- **electrolyte drinks**:
 - encourage tourists to drink a soft drink with electrolytes in it: e.g. Royal D; this helps replace minerals lost when sweating.
- tourists may take a while to get use to the **local food** compared to what they normally eat and this could upset their stomachs a bit; and
- have **important medical numbers** on your cell phone in case a tourist is sick and needs medical help.

Security issues

Remember to:

- tell tourists about any relevant crime issues in the areas they are travelling to and strongly recommend/advise that all valuables (expensive, special or important things) are left in their hotel safe.

Safety issues

Remember to:

- tell tourists to be **very careful** when crossing roads; and
- tell tourists to also never use motorbike taxis and should avoid cyclos at night

Note: There are different ways to do a safety briefing – it depends where you are and what the tour and activity is:

- show a video/DVD;
- hand out safety equipment and/or protective/safety clothing;
- demonstrate/show how to use safety equipment;
- help tourists on how to use/wear their safety items; and/ or
- explain how difficult or easy the physical activity will be before they start.

3.1.7 Questions

At the end of the briefing, allow time for questions. The tourists may have questions for you, and you may have questions for them:

- any questions from the participants?
- ask the tourists questions to give them a chance to get to know each other and encourage conversation:
 - Why did you choose this trip?
 - Any highlights you are looking forward to?
 - Any special interest you have that we may be able to assist you with – craft, culture, history, dance, sports, etc.?

3.1.8 Build rapport

In your briefing, remember that this is a good time to start building rapport. You can do this by:

- encouraging/asking the group to enjoy the tour/excursion – and motivating/helping them to do and enjoy all the activities and inclusions;
- inviting the group to:
 - ask questions throughout the tour;
 - tell tour staff if they feel uncomfortable, sick, injured or upset; and to
 - tell tour staff if they notice anything that may affect the safety of the tour/group.

3.2 Handle health, security and safety issues on tour

Health, security and safety are very important on any tour!

If a tour group member is injured, has an accident or suffers then they may take legal action (sue) against the Tour Operator or the Tour Guide for not looking after them properly under the ***Duty of Care*** responsibility.

How to handle an incident of items being stolen from a guest room:

If anything is stolen from the room, you (the tour guide) have to find out:

- Who could get into the rooms?
- What exactly has been stolen?
- Help to get a written statement from the hotel or tourist police.
- Advise tourist to contact their insurance company.
- Make sure tourist has enough money to get by on the trip.

Safety on boats:
Responsibility of the Tour Operator (DMC)

- Every year they will ask for:
 - a copy of **pilot license**; and
 - proof that the boat owner has **public liability insurance**.
- Tour Operator (DMC) will regularly:
 - do **spot checks** of the boat safety using a checklist;

Responsibility of the Tour Guide

- When arriving on a boat the Tour Guide must:
 - **check** that different things are in place e.g. **maintenance records, enough life jackets in the right size and condition, fire extinguisher**, etc.
- Always give a **safety briefing** to all tour members to keep life jackets on or close to them (life jackets are often under suitcases/ seats / hidden away).

Road safety:

- **This is the biggest safety risk to tourists:** they don't know that people drive on the other side of the road to their home country)!
- **People with a risk of death:** Older, jet-lagged tourists that come from countries where driving is on the 'other side of the road' are especially at risk. They don't look the right way and can step out in front of vehicles and be killed.

Activity 5: Health, Safety & Security Case Studies
Case Study 1: Health

A tourist collapses on your tour and is rushed to hospital. Everyone is very worried it is a heart attack, but it turns out that she was badly dehydrated.

1. What should you have done to prevent/avoid a situation like this?
2. Are there any other health situations that you may have to handle on a tour?
3. What else should you do to handle medical emergencies?

Case Study 2: Security

A guest comes to you in the hotel one morning saying that their camera, their wallet with money, credit cards, traveller's cheques, and their passport went missing from their room the previous evening during dinner.

4. How do you handle this situation?

Case Study 3: Safety on boats

A British tourist drowned on the upper Mekong in June 2015, when a slow boat turned over in rapids. These accidents and tragedies do happen.

5. How can a tour guide manage risks when taking tourists on boats?

3.3 Counting participants

Activity 6: Case Study

Naray (the guide) and Ekaphot (the driver) were guiding a couple of Australian tourists from Vientiane to Pakse. They were travelling by road, and stopped for a rest break along the way.

When they got back to the car from their break, Naray and Ekaphot were chatting to each other. They got into the car and continued on their journey to Pakse. After an hour and a half, approximately 100km from the rest stop, Naray turned around to see how his tourists were doing. He thought they had been lying down sleeping so did not want to disturb them. When he looked around, he saw that the back seat was empty and his tourist couple were not there!

Questions:

1. What should the tour guide have done?
2. Why?
3. How could this have been prevented?
4. What was the effect on the tourists?
5. What was the effect on the tour company?

It's important to count tourists before, during and after the tour to make sure no one gets lost. Use the same way of counting to keep track of tour group members throughout the tour.

When to count participants:

- often;
- before the tour leaves a point where tourists had left a vehicle; and
- at certain points along a walking tour which are not too far apart.

How to count tour group members:

- know the starting number at the beginning of the tour;
- update records like manifests and tour member lists when numbers change;
- do a head count of tourists when the group arrives at a point;
- stand at the entry door of a vehicle and check people as they get on after a stop – and tick them off against the manifest;

- do a roll-call: call out everyone's names and tick them off on the manifest;
- count the number of seats filled on the bus when people are on again – 25 tourists means 25 seats should be filled; and/ or
- asking tourists "Is everyone here?"

3.3.1 Find lost or late tour group members

Tour members may be missing because:

- they go to the restroom;
- they walk off;
- they walk very slowly; and/ or
- they get lost or don't know where to find you/the meeting point.

If you conduct a tour at only one attraction, site or venue, then it will be easier to find a lost tourist. They will be somewhere in the area and you may have to spend a couple of minutes looking for them. However, for tours that have more than one site you need to follow the procedures of that Tour Operator.

Time: looking for a lost group member can take time. Don't make everyone late/disadvantage the other group members. Rather continue the tour without the lost person. Make sure that tour members understand this! Remind them to be on time.

Danger: if you conduct a tour at a place which could be dangerous or risky like cliffs, water sources or machinery etc., you will need to tell someone as soon as you notice the tourist is missing. Follow the Standard Operating Procedures if this happens.

What to do if a tour member is missing:

1. Stop the tour

- count the group again;
- see how many tourists are missing and their names;
- **Call the missing tourist/s** on their contact number or a local number if they have a local sim card.
 - do a **short search of the area** close by – call the name of the missing person/use megaphone: do not get other tour group members to help with the search;
 - ask other tourists if they know where the missing tourist is – ask the group:
 - "does anyone know where David is?", or "When was the last time anyone saw Cindy?"
- **Handle the group:**
 - do not let other tour group members go look for the missing person/s:

1. risk: You may lose more tour members and may put them at risk/in danger. It is the Tour Operator's job to do and/or organise search and recovery activities.
- ask other tour group members not to leave the area – this is so:
 1. you can give them drinks or refreshments while you wait – always try to make sure other tour members are as comfortable as possible;
 2. you make sure a bad situation does not get worse e.g. more tour members go missing; and
 3. you can keep them close/ in one place to ask them questions if you need to.
- **Call the operations office or tour company management** for advice on what do to – tell them about the situation:
 1. how many people are missing;
 2. who is missing: names;
 3. where they went missing;
 4. what time they went missing; and
 5. what has already been done to find the missing tourist/s.
- **Hand-over to other staff or police/authorities:**
 1. prepare details of the missing person/s to give to other staff and/or the authorities e.g.:
 - details from the manifest;
 - photo ID
 - details about the tourist from yourself or other tour group members (like those who sat next to them; those who shared activities with them; those who were in the same boat/car when they went on a ride) – for example, what they were wearing, medical needs/ conditions; and
 - if you do not know what they were wearing, see if anyone took photos of them on the day so you can show a photo to the authorities.

Tips: some precautions (plans to prevent problems)

- ✓ Make sure that tour members have your phone number right from the start of the tour;
- ✓ have a list of contact numbers for all tour members, especially if they have local numbers while in Laos; and
- ✓ make sure all tour members have the name and address of the hotel you are staying at or going to so that they can get there if they get lost on the way.

3.4 Load tourists/passengers

When your group boards a bus or other transport, you should:

- help people board the coach/get into the vehicle/s;
- do a head count of the tour group – to see/confirm ‘pax’;
- decide who sits where – especially on a long tour where people will take turns to sit in the best seats (in the front);
- help tourists load their personal belongings in the vehicle;
- work quickly – it is important so the tour can start on time;
- starting on-time is very important – if the briefing starts late, the tour will start late and it is important all tours start on-time, so they can cover the promised activities and finish on-time;
- running late is bad for the tour group members – they may have other places to be and other things to do, based on the itinerary they have;
- running late with *this* group can also make the *next* tour groups’ tour leave late; and
- running late also affects other staff in the organisation who clean the vehicles, re-stock refreshments, provide food, and other support activities.

3.5 Direct tourists to the first destination/activity

One the way to the first destination or activity, you should:

- Create some interest/excitement about the first stop they will be making;
- give some information and advice about the first stop or activity but do not give too much yet – tourists only remember small pieces of information at a time;
- give any resources for the first stop or activity – like:
 - information sheets;
 - vouchers/coupons;
 - safety items; and/ or
 - equipment and resources.

3.6 Build Rapport

Remember that you carry on building rapport with your members all the time. Some tips:

- make people feel noticed and special: use their names
- give them attention, make eye contact, listen properly;
- ask questions to get them talking; and
- join in on group conversations, if it’s about the tour.

Encourage participation

Where possible/allowed the Tour Guide should encourage members to join in the tour activities **BUT do it with sensitivity** because:

- some tourists do not want to join in every activity; and
- some tourists will not be able to join in every activity because of health, interest, etc.

Encourage tourists to join in:

- be enthusiastic/excited about the activity;
- give clear and detailed information and instructions;
- demonstrate/show what will be done in the activity;
- give tips/information about how to do the activity best and easiest;
- tell them about your personal experience - how it feels to do the activity; and
- ask tourists how they are doing, and about their experience during the activity.

3.7 The tour itinerary

Activity 7: Itinerary discussion

In small groups, discuss and answer these questions:

1. What is a tour itinerary?
2. Who makes up the itinerary?
3. What is included in an itinerary?
4. Why are these things included?
5. What are the criteria used to develop a tour itinerary?
6. Who can change a tour itinerary?
7. When can an itinerary be changed?

A tour itinerary is a carefully planned programme of events - developed by a Tour Operator. The tour itinerary is planned to:

- give the best possible experience for a tour member;
- make the best use of time;
- give a specific type and quality of activity and experience for tourists: for example an adventure tour includes a number of adventure activities, but a cultural tour focusses more on history, heritage, culture, people, arts, music, etc.
- be liked by and excite a particular type of tourist – young, old, fit, special interest, etc.
- fit in a budget (money that can be spent) for the company, to make profits; and
- many things like quality, health, safety and price help decide what is included in the tour and what isn't.

The Tour Operator	The Tourist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carefully develops tour packages; and • plans itineraries that a specific group of people (the 'market') will like; • includes what is possible in the tour in terms of time, cost and quality; • puts together the tours and sells them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ foreign tour operators; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looks at the tours available; • chooses the best one for them for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ price; ○ duration – how long it is; ○ what it includes; ○ if it matches their interests; and/ or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ foreign tourists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ quality – luxury vs mid-level. ● expects to get what they chose: all the activities, the route, etc. ● will be unhappy if they don't get what they have paid for!
---	---

Follow the Itinerary

It is your duty as a Tour Guide to make sure that you deliver the advertised itinerary to tour participants. This means:

- make sure tourists visit all destinations/sites/experiences on the itinerary;
- make sure tourists see all promised attractions;
- make sure that all expected activities are done (including interpretive activities e.g. a market visit, a cooking class, etc.);
- deliver all the products and services advertised for the tour; and
- follow the programme and schedule/timing in the itinerary.

You will do this best if you:

- **know the itinerary** – keep a copy with you that you can check when you need to;
 - The itinerary is the key to the tour so it is **very important** that you know exactly what is listed/arranged/promised to the tour group.
- **start on-time** – if possible be prepared to start early;
- **give briefings on the vehicle** instead of when you arrive at a destination
- **give materials and information**, vouchers, equipment and others resources on the vehicle before you arrive– not at the place;
- **check the time** –always know what the time is: more important for short trips where it is very difficult to make up/catch up lost time;
- **put tour members into groups** when you give information so you don't waste time repeating things over and over; and
- **communicate with destinations and attractions** –let them know/remind them the tour has started, when you expect to arrive and what their job is.
 - This is useful because the destination/attraction can tell you about any problems that may affect your tour - like big crowds, parking, etc. You then have time to plan how to handle it before you get there.

3.7.1 Changes to itineraries

Tour Guide and/or driver cannot make changes to the itinerary because they think it is a good idea! Only make changes in the following types of situations:

- **weather**: if weather stops/prevents an activity – e.g. kayaking in heavy rain;
- **safety**: activity is not safe anymore – e.g. hiking in wet and slippery conditions;

- **unexpected events** or activities prevent it: e.g. a temple has closed because of a special festival; and/ or
- **unexpected opportunities:** a special festival gives an opportunity to see a cultural show or do something related to the festival.

The tour guide should never complain about an itinerary or give tour members ideas about what else they could have done or should be doing. This is very unprofessional! It is different if there are extra activities and ideas that tourists can do in the free time they have on tour.

The exception is if:

1. all members of the group want to make a small change to the itinerary;
2. It does not change what the tour costs ; and/ or
3. you call and the operations office allows the change.

Then, it is very important that **the whole group** must agree to the change for example, you cannot have only 9 tourists out of 10 who doesn't want to see 'another temple' when that temple is a planned part of the advertised tour price.

Changes to the itinerary:

- must be approved by the Tour Operator: contact them, explain the situation and the solution and any other details like extra cost or time, and get permission or other ideas before you make the change/s;
- tell the tour group members – as soon as possible;
- explain why the itinerary needs to change;
- if there are options/other ideas, discuss the options, positives and negatives of each with the group, let them discuss and decide what they want to do;
- offer a different option or change that gives tour members the same quality or even better experience than what is taken out;
- must not cost the Tour Operator a lot of money! Changes that will cost the operator money must first be allowed before you do them; and
- must match the standards and reputation of the tour company

Do not make changes like:

- end the tour earlier than the planned time; and
- include stops that you want (e.g. where you get commissions or tips).

Commission/shopping stops: (not usually planned or allowed)

Some operators do not have a problem with commission shopping stops if clients are satisfied. Sometimes, clients are more satisfied/ happy. Commission/shopping stops must never dissatisfy or make the client unhappy.

If you have ideas or suggestions about itinerary changes:

- write to the tour company – usually by email – after the tour; and/ or
- make the suggestion with reasons for why it is a good change to make, based on your experiences.

3.8 Provide on-going information

You have to keep your tour members informed at all times.

Activity 8: Mekong Boat trip case study

A tour group was on a boat on the Mekong River. It was a lovely day, and everything was going well until suddenly, the rudder broke. The boat couldn't steer properly and swung into the river. The current was so strong it felt like the boat was going to capsize/turn over. The Tour Guide was busy talking to the boat Captain in Lao language about the situation as they tried to get the boat under control and make sure of everyone's safety.

The tour group was very afraid because they could see something was wrong, but they did not know what happened because they could not speak the Lao. They started to panic.

Questions:

1. What should the Tour Guide have done?
2. Why?
3. What was the effect on the tour group/tourists?
4. What was the effect on the tour company?

General guidelines when guiding:
Do:

- show where restroom facilities are so people can use the toilet or freshen up;
- choose the right sites to deliver/give information, commentary or respond to questions or requests – like in the shade (not sun) or where they won't get wet, or out of the wind;
- tell tourists how long (distance and/or time) until the next stop, site, refreshment stop;
- keep the group together and don't allow tourists to take too long;
- handle problems between members of the tour group – sometimes there is conflict between members of a tour group and this can upset the whole group;
- ask tourists to change their behaviour and/or language – where, for example, their behaviour:
 - is culturally rude: e.g. taking photos without asking;
 - is socially unacceptable (not allowed): e.g. swimming without clothes;
 - is illegal: against the law/rules; and/ or

- threatens or intimidates others/ put others in danger: e.g. shouting at someone

3.9 Walking tour techniques

1. Show and tell the **Top Visual Priorities** first – the most visible (that you can see) and important things. Some are planned, but also talk about what the group notices and are interested in, e.g. birds, trees, or any unusual or interesting activity!

2. Tips:

- a. Do not give commentary while you walk. Only the people in front can see the things you talk about: the rest will not hear what you say and share.
- b. Never walk backwards while you make commentary in front of the group;
- c. Never point out special things to tourists who walk ahead with you. The tourists at the back won't be able to see things and hear information.
- d. If you do talk or answer questions while you walk, share the information- say the question again and the answer again - when the group is together again/at your next stop.
- e. When you talk, stand in the shade and do not leave people out in the sun!

3.9.1 Pace

Pace is about how fast or slow you walk. Check your group and set your pace so it suits their needs.

1. Set your pace to the same speed as the slowest tour member;
2. Know what the group cannot do. Always check how the group is doing – how well can they keep up with the tour group – are you going too fast for them – are they panting? Sweating? Overheating? Not coping?
3. Make sure you can always see the person at the back.
4. Be careful when you turn corners that you don't lose people at the back who have not seen that you have turned.

3.9.2 Position

Guidelines
1. Never walk too far ahead
2. Choose a place that is big enough for the whole group to stop at
3. Wait until group is together and pays attention before you start to speak
4. Give your group time to get together
5. Always face your group while you speak
6. Make sure no one in the group is standing behind you
7. Make sure the group does not block a walkway or entrance
8. When another guide with a tourist group is in the same area, be careful: stand so your back is to the other guide so voices don't fight to be heard

9. Choose a sheltered area, avoid elements like rain, wind, or glare
10. Position the group so they don't look into the sun
11. Look at tall structures from a distance, e.g. across the street, but smaller architectural features from close by.
12. Point out items precisely, e.g. "to the right of the tree on the skyline".
13. Sometimes you have to tell your commentary before you get to a place if there is no space in that place to talk, e.g. when the walkway is too narrow to stop, or when the walk will pass the home of a famous person: "We will pass x, y, z, and look at the decoration as we pass xyz. X lived there. In this case, tell them anything interesting to look for before they get there.

3.10 Provide extra information or help to tour members

Tour Guides have to follow an itinerary, but also give extra information and support the tour group members on the tour:

- **Look for and explain:**
 - local events and activities; and
 - current issues/problems that affect the country/local community.

- **Suggest what to do in free time**

Most tourists will have no idea what they can do in the area when they have free time. Give some suggestions/ideas and advice about to do. This makes their tour experience even better, and makes them even happier with the tour. Remember:

 - tourists don't know the area;
 - they don't know what they can do and see;
 - give ideas and options like:
 - places to eat;
 - things to see – museum, market, etc.;
 - things to do e.g. walk, kayak, having nail art on their nails, get a massage, etc.;
 - and/ or
 - transport they can use and transport they should not use.

- **Give directions** to the local facilities like:
 - Restrooms (toilets);
 - shops;
 - transport;
 - banks/ATMs;
 - health care (pharmacy/clinic); and/ or
 - points/places of interest.

3.11 Conclude (end) the tour

How to conclude a (short) tour:

- get together, count the group, and invite questions;
- tell them exactly where they are so that they can find their way from there (e.g. on a day tour);
- prepare them for their next or future destination, and provide any necessary information;
- make sure everyone has all personal items and important information;
- publicly thank the driver (if there is one) and say the polite Goodbyes and Thank Yous;
- collect tour surveys if tour members filled them in, and provide
- **tipping envelopes:** if tourists tip locally at the end of the tour there may be a process for this to happen (for the driver and the guide).

Topic 4: Post-Tour Procedures

There are certain procedures you have to do at the end of a tour. These depend on the type and length of the tour.

4.1 Customer Feedback

Feedback from the tour members can really help with making future tours better. Tourists can say what they liked, what they did not like, and give ideas and comments.

This can be done in a different ways:

- **Watch** the tourists to see their body language and their reactions:
 - at different places and when they are doing different activities;
 - when they arrive at certain destinations for activities/tours;
 - when they are doing activities;
- **Listen** to:
 - what tour group members say as they take part in an activity;
 - what they say when they get back on board the tour vehicle after an activity; and/ or
 - what they say when they get back after the tour has finished.
- **Get written feedback** from tour group members:
 - comments cards/feedback forms at the end of a tour;
 - online feedback– which is available any time for tour members to use; and/ or
 - letters of complaints and/or compliments.

Procedure (feedback forms/ surveys):

1. Hand out the feedback forms at the end of the tour;
2. Tourists fill them in and put these in a sealed envelope
3. Collect envelope; and
4. Give the sealed envelope to the Tour Operator – you are not allowed to open it!

Important!

The tour survey/ feedback form is the only way for the Tour Operator or brand to know if the service has been good. Client feedback about all parts of the tour is very important (there are some tour companies that pay bonuses to guides if feedback is really good).

4.2 Handle check-outs

1. Make sure room keys are returned
2. Organise porters for rooms beforehand, and organise tipping of porters if this is included your tour budget
3. Make sure passports are returned to tourists, if the hotel has been keeping these

4.3 Handle departures

1. Just as for arrivals transfers, you must make sure that a specific person is responsible to confirm and reconfirm departure flight time and day.
2. Lao Airlines often making changes, so this is an issue in Laos.

4.4 Tour forms and reports

- You may have to fill in and hand in a tour summary report for Tour Operator
- They can be looked at later if there is a complaint and
- The reports must also include recommendations for improving the tour.

Topic 5: Working within the law**5.1 Employment contracts**

Tour Guides are engaged by Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Destination Management Companies (DMCs) and sometimes sites or operators like a coffee plantation, a museum, etc.

There are two different ways that a Tour Guide can be hired: freelance and full time.

5.1.1 Freelance

Many guides in Laos are freelance guides. This means that the person or organisation paying the guide books their time for a tour, and pays them to deliver that tour. They usually get paid by the day at a set rate, for example \$50. The payer does not have to pay salary tax, pension, give leave, and generally is not allowed to restrict/limit the work the guide does.

They:

- are generally not full time staff;
- do not get full-time salaries (they get wages instead);
- do not get paid if they are not working;
- do not get any employment benefits;
- get paid for the number of days or services worked;
- must arrange their own insurance e.g. health insurance;
- must pay their own taxes; and
- must represent the employer and the standards of that organisation while they deliver a tour.

When the tour is over, the guide sends an invoice to the organisation, who pays them for the days on the tour or the services he/she provided.

However, if the tour guide delivers a good tour, and builds a good reputation and relationship with the Tour Operator, they might get more work from them if there are tours.

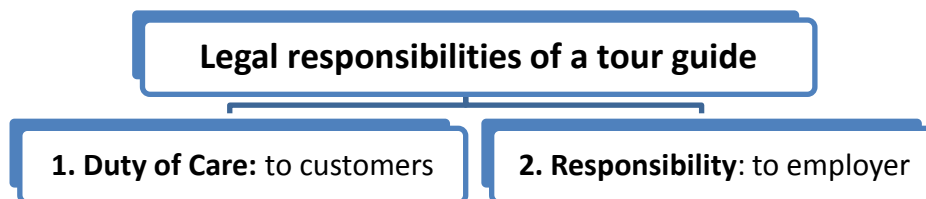
5.1.2 Employed

Some guides are employed full time by a tour operator – this means that they work in season and out of season.

They:

- are part time, full time or casual;
- get any employment benefits like paid leave, health insurance;
- have an employment contract with the employer to give better control and control over the direction and giving of work to the employee; and
- tax is deducted from their salary (or a nets salary is paid).

5.2 Your legal responsibilities as a guide



5.2.1 Duty of Care

Your first responsibility is **Duty of Care to the tour members/tourists**. All businesses and employees have a common law Duty of Care to:

- Create and keep a touring environment that does not include risks to people (staff, members of the public, customers)
- Do something to prevent harm (where possible) to people/customers/tour group members or their property/belongings.

If Duty of Care is not done and someone is injured or suffers a loss, then the person or company that caused the injury or loss can be in legal trouble. The injured person can (and often does) try to get paid for their injury, loss, suffering or pain.

When a person takes legal action under Civil law they **bring a claim** against (sue) the other party usually for things like:

- negligence – behaviour which has caused loss or injury; or
- breach of contract – where (for example) the tourist believes their tour/excursion did not deliver what was advertised/promised

What is Negligence?

Failure to take proper care over something

You can be held responsible if you are negligent!

If an accident happens, and the company is sued by the tour member, the case is investigated.

If this investigation finds out that you were in any way **negligent**, then YOU can be held responsible and you can be sued by the client.

You must make sure that you think about risks, and never behave in a negligent way. Also, your tour guiding license protects you to a bit - you are an official and professional guide, and the courts will consider this.

If the injured person can prove that it is the fault of the guide or the tour company, then the tour company will have to pay (lots of money to) the injured person.

This is not the type of situation your employer wants to be in!

To prevent situations like this you must:

- make sure that you always follow safety instructions;
- act (do things) within the law where necessary – e.g. drive in the speed limit, follow road safety rules, etc.;
- think about the how much risk an activity has;
- think about whether you think someone can do an activity and stop them if you think they cannot;
- think about conditions to ensure they are safe; and
- look out for any possible danger or situation where someone could get harmed.

5.2.2 Duty to Employer

Your second responsibility is to your employer: what you do has a direct impact on the Tour Operator. If you make a mistake, and someone is injured or has a bad tour experience, the tour operator will get blamed and may even lose money because they have to give money back to the client, or pay damages.

To carry out your responsibility so the tourist and the Tour Operator are happy, you have to:

- think carefully about what you do and what can happen;
- assess (think carefully about) risks: if something is not safe, then don't do it!
- assess group members can they do activities: do something and handle or stop some from taking part if you think there is a risk.

We will learn more about assessing risks in Module 5.

It is critically important to contact the Operations Office with tour situations because they know the legal implications, can make the right decisions and give the right advice or permissions, within the law

5.3 Legal knowledge of Tour Guides

Tour Operators and Tour Guides are breaking the law if they:

- misrepresent tour activities, accommodation and other services and parts of a tour,
- give negligent or inappropriate advice
- provide unqualified or inappropriate staff or unsuitable suppliers to their tours

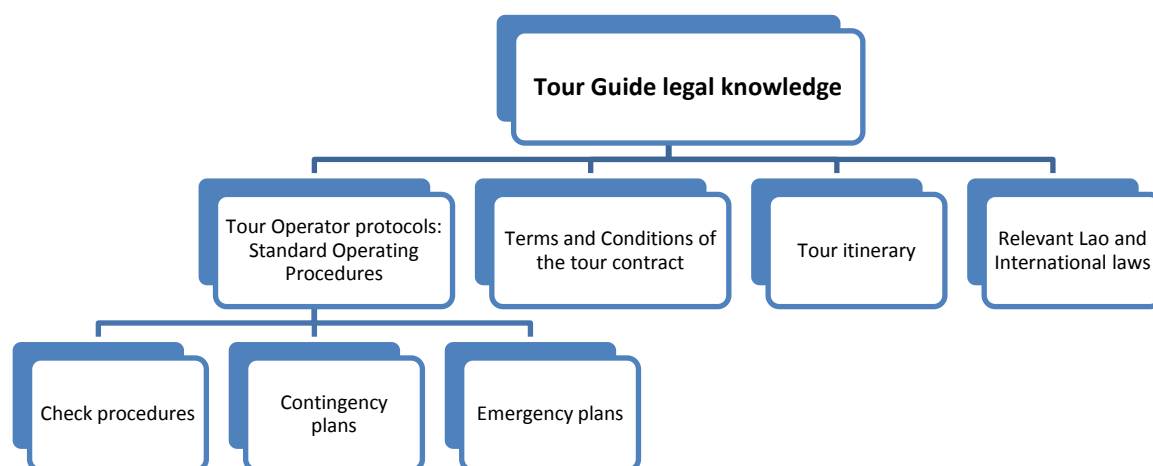
- are negligent in of the way they choose supplier
- do not look after the care, wellbeing, comfort and safety of each group member

What you need to know and do to stay within the law

- A guide/tour leader is responsible for their group and problems or incidents that happen while on tour – like injury, loss of enjoyment, loss of property: all are as the responsibility of the guide
- A guide must be responsible and make decisions for the group – and think about the contract of the tour and the best interests/needs of the tourists when doing so.

To keep to the law, you need certain knowledge to guide you to make decisions:

1. the standard operating procedures of the Tour Operator;
2. the terms and conditions of the contract that the Tour Operator has with the tourist;
3. the tour itinerary; and
4. the laws and regulations of the country you are working in.



5.3.1 Tour Operator protocols

You must learn the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for a Tour Operator and also:

- study and use **checking procedures** as the business wants;
- learn, practice and implement **contingency plans** – to handle situations where planned itinerary, routes, activities and similar cannot be followed; and
- learn, practice and implement **emergency plans** – to handle emergency events which might happened on tour.

5.3.2 Terms and conditions of the tour

When you work for a Tour Operator, you must learn, understand and make sure you stick to 'Terms and Conditions' that apply and are given to tour group members for their tour, including:

- What is included and what is not included (inclusion and exclusions)
- Changes to the itinerary
- Who is responsible for any personal and property loss/injury/damage.

5.3.3 Tour Itinerary

If you don't follow the itinerary, you can't deliver the product that the client bought. You have to:

- Provide the services and activities promised in the brochure, information and contract for the tour
- Make sure that the accommodation/services/sights/attractions that were promised on the tour are actually included

5.3.4 Legal Requirements of tours

It is important to understand that the touring industry has many laws that Tour Guides need to know about and follow when guiding tours.

Comply with legislation

It is a standard procedure all Tour Guides comply with all relevant legislation. This means that they must look for and meet all requirements and regulations:

- laws for Tour Guides – for example licensing, etc.;
- laws in different countries they visit/lead tours to; and
- laws for tour activities on tour – e.g. boating safety standards.

Remember:

- employers may be responsible for the actions of their staff; and
- employees (Tour Guides) **do not have an excuse** if they commit an offence because their employer told them to break or ignore a law.

5.3.4.1 Laos laws

As a Tour Guide, you have to listen to laws and regulations in Laos, for example:

- speed limits,
- tariffs,
- guiding licenses and requirements, and
- procedures, etc.

Note that Lao laws for guiding are still developed/new. Make sure you know about new laws and rules.

5.3.4.2 International Travel Law

If DMC contracts with an international Tour Operator in, for example, Germany, the European Travel Laws apply to the contract and the how the contract is delivered, if the local operator can reasonably follow them. The DMC has to think about a lot of things during a tour like:

Health and safety issues:

- This is very important! E.g. from the UK many travel businesses ask their overseas Tour Operator partners to get hotels, vehicles, and other suppliers to complete health and safety forms;
- this is very useful and important, because it makes standards better in the industry, makes legal risks less, makes travellers more confident in the destination, etc. ;
- however, in Laos even some quite large suppliers do not have insurance/ can't follow the rules of basic safety standards (e.g. no fire extinguishers on wooden boats); and
- **Tour Guides need to check things like this** – E.g. fire extinguishers, life jackets and so on when doing tour activities and using different suppliers and services.

5.4 Potential (possible) legal claims

Sometimes tour group members/clients take legal action if any of the following situations happen:

- the tour does not match the terms and conditions – as given by the Tour Operator in their promotional materials;
- a Tour Leader/Guide does not follow the itinerary – which is your responsibility: unless you can't help it (weather, closure of attractions, traffic accidents);
- late service – or late arrivals at destinations;
- bad and/or cancelled service – that planned tour included;
- promises that are not kept –any promises;
- itinerary/accommodation changes – where routes, destinations or accommodation not as nice as promised is provided;
- loss/theft of property – while it is the responsibility of the tour company; and/ or
- accident, illness or death which happens on tour.

5.5 Effect on the tour company

Anything you do affects the tour company in different ways:

- **their reputation:** tour companies must have a good reputation to keep on getting clients. If the Tour Guide makes a mistake that affects the reputation of the Tour Operating company, the company could lose business and money;
- **their finances:** if they are sued, or if they have to pay damages or fix a situation caused by a Tour Guide, they lose money.

This will not make them happy with you, and they will probably not want to employ you again.