



**CONSUMER
PROTECTION BC**



Inspection Guide

Travel agents and wholesalers

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A special note related to the COVID-19 pandemic

Due to the pandemic, Consumer Protection BC stopped doing in-person inspections of our licensed businesses in March 2020.

Since then, we have learned more about the impact of COVID-19 in the marketplace and on you, as one of our licensed businesses. We have now resumed in-person inspections.

With a few exceptions, our standard inspections policies and rules apply as outlined in this inspection guide. This also means that unless there are mitigating circumstances specific to your business practices, no advance notice of inspection will be made.

We take safety seriously.

Your safety and the safety of our staff matter to us.

Here are some of the changes we've made:

- Inspectors will continue to wear N-95 masks for the foreseeable future.
- Inspectors will have their own supply of PPE and will sanitize their hands and other surfaces.
- Inspectors may ask for licensee-employees to wear masks when communicating with or in the same room as the Inspector. Failing this, the licensee/employees may be asked to remain 2 meters distant from the Inspector at all times.
- Inspectors will allow for their credentials to be examined (from a distance). Inspectors will provide business cards at the time of inspection.
- Where possible, inspectors may ask that they be allowed to isolate themselves in a private area of the business while they perform the administrative functions of the inspection.
- Inspectors will select items to be inspected. This amends the former practice of allowing the licensee's employees assist with that process.

Inspectors may ask you about the status of the location being inspected. These questions will include:

- Have any employees at the location been diagnosed with Covid-19 within the last 2 weeks?
- Is anyone at the licensed location suffering from illness or Covid-19 symptoms?

If you have questions about our protocols and processes, the best option is to speak to the Inspector that engages with you during an inspection.

Thank you,

The Consumer Protection BC Inspections & Case Management Team

Introduction

Consumer Protection BC is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the *Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act* (BPCPA), the *Ticket Sales Act* (TSA), the *Cremation Interment and Funeral Services Act* (CIFSA), and Travel Industry Regulation (Regulation). Together, the BPCPA and TLR govern the conduct of persons who engage in the business or occupation of travel agents and travel wholesalers and the licensing requirements for travel businesses in British Columbia.

This guide has been prepared to better inform and educate you on the compliance inspection process. As one of our licensed businesses, it is your responsibility to conduct yourself and operate your business in compliance with the laws and conditions on your license. We recommend you take the time needed to read this guide fully and to make sure that your managers and staff are familiar with the information contained herein.

This guide serves as a reference, so you know what to expect and how to prepare for an inspection conducted by a Consumer Protection BC Inspector.

This is a general overview of the inspection process. This guide is not intended to provide legal advice and it is not an exhaustive review of the legislative provisions affecting you or the operation of your licensed business. We recommend that you get copies of the legislation and review it in detail. You can order from Crown Publications at www.crownpub.bc.ca.

For more general information, visit our corporate website at www.consumerprotectionbc.ca. To learn more about your licensing requirements and legal obligations, [visit the Get & Keep your Licence](#) section of our website. To find out how best to contact us, please [visit the Contact Us](#) page of our website.

Background: our responsibilities

The role of Consumer Protection BC

Consumer Protection BC licenses and inspects regulated businesses, responds to consumer inquiries, investigates alleged violations of consumer protection laws, classifies all general release and adult films, and provides information and referrals to consumers.

As part of our responsibility to ensure compliance with the law and conditions on a licence, we regularly perform risk-based inspections as well as inspections in response to consumer complaints. When an inspector identifies issues of non-compliance, the inspector may open a complaint file. When the eventual outcome of a complaint file results in voluntary compliance with the law or some form of enforcement action being taken by the Director, the outcome is published to our website. We share this information to enable consumers to make informed decisions.

The role of the licensee

You are legally responsible for compliance with the laws and licensing conditions as it relates to the operation of your business. You are also responsible for ensuring your employees and agents are acting in compliance with the laws and licensing conditions applicable to your business.

You must fully cooperate with an inspector. Providing false or misleading information to an inspector or obstructing or hindering an inspection are serious contraventions of the laws we administer. A person who obstructs, hinders, or makes misleading statements to an inspector is subject to prosecution under *the Offence Act*.

Inspection process

Scheduling and notification

Inspectors attend businesses located throughout the Province, sometimes arriving unannounced. The BPCPA, CIFSA and MPA allows for an inspector to enter a business at any reasonable time to determine compliance with the law, conditions on a licence, the suitability of a licensee or an applicant for a licence.

Authority to inspect

It is your responsibility to cooperate fully during an inspection. In most instances, an inspector will provide their official identification on arrival, or a request can be made for them to produce it. You must not do anything to obstruct, hinder, or interfere with an inspector's entry and inspection of a business.

The BPCPA gives the inspector the authority to:

- Inquire into any business, affairs or conduct of a person
- Inspect, audit or examine any record, goods or other things or the provision of services in the premises
- Inspect a vehicle or vessel that is being used for business purposes
- Require a person who has possession or control of any records, goods, or other things in the premises, vehicle or vessel to produce the records, goods or things

- Make a record, including a record on film, audio tape, video tape or otherwise, of the premises, vehicle or vessel or any other things in the premises, vehicle or vessel
- Remove any record from the premise, vehicle or vessel for purpose of making copies
- Remove and retain any record, good or other thing that may be required as evidence from the premises, vehicle or vessel.

Conclusion of inspection

Once the inspection is complete, the inspector will review the results with you or the manager on duty at the time of the inspection. The inspector may discuss any non-compliance identified during the inspection at this time. A Certification of Inspection will be prepared by the inspector and a digital copy will be emailed to you at the email address identified in your My Account set up with Consumer Protection BC.

In order to receive the digital copy of the Certificate of Inspection, you must have your My Account set up. If your email is not entered into the My Account, you will not receive the Certificate of Inspection and other pertinent documents related to the inspection. To setup your My Account, please go to www.consumerprotectionbc.ca and select “MyAccount Login” or contact operations@consumerprotectionbc.ca for assistance.

Post Inspection Report and follow up

After returning to the office, the inspector will document the inspection, update your file and, if required, inform other departments within Consumer Protection BC of the inspection results.

The inspector will update the Inspection Checklist¹ and email you a report with the results of the inspection to the email address you provided in My Account. The report will identify any alleged violations that you must correct and/or any alleged violations for which the inspector recommends that enforcement action be taken by the Director. Any further instruction(s) will be noted in the inspector’s notes in the report.

For more information on the enforcement process, please see the section below entitled “Enforcement.”

We may conduct a follow up inspection to ensure that non-compliance found at the previous inspection is corrected.

Enforcement

If an inspector detects violations that they believe should proceed to enforcement hearing, they will notify you of these alleged contraventions in the report issued after the inspection. The inspector will also prepare a Report to the Director (RD) document for the Director of Inspections & Case Management. A copy of the RD will also be sent to you. The RD will identify the allegation(s) proceeding to enforcement hearing and the evidence the inspector is relying on to support the allegation(s). You will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations made in the RD. A decision-maker will then decide whether the allegation took place, and whether statutory action such as an administrative

¹ See Appendix – Inspection Checklist

penalty, licensing action or other remedial order is appropriate. Note: the decision to impose an administrative penalty is at the discretion of the Director or the delegated decision maker.

Before deciding to impose an Administrative Monetary Penalty (“AMP”) and calculating the amount of the AMP, the decision-maker will consider the factors set out in section 164(2) of the BCPA. To calculate the amount of the AMP the decision-maker will normally apply the policy of Consumer Protection BC, “Calculating Administrative Monetary Penalties Policy and Procedures.”, including its AMP Penalty Matrix. This policy is available on the website of Consumer Protection BC at www.consumerprotectionbc.ca. You can access the policy electronically by clicking the following link: [Admin Penalty Policy and Procedure](#).

If you are dissatisfied with the decision, you may apply for a reconsideration of the decision.

Further information on the policies and procedures relating to the calculation of administrative monetary penalties and the reconsideration process can be found by visiting the About us (Our policies) section of our website at www.consumerprotectionbc.ca.

What will be inspected

Remember that while inspectors attend businesses to test for compliance with the laws we administer and any conditions we have imposed on a licence, they are also there to educate and answer questions. Please feel free to approach them about any business issues or problems related to the laws we administer.

Typically, you can expect that an inspector will do some of the following:

- Review the legislation and the conditions on a licence for any issues that are identified;
- Inspect the physical layout of the business;
- Inspect legal, financial and other business records;
- Observe and record your business practices, identify deficiencies or problem areas that may lead to non-compliance;
- Identify any contraventions;
- Answer your questions and help you understand your obligations.


To find out what an inspector will examine during the inspection, please read a sample inspection checklist (Appendix-Inspection Checklist). Note: the items on the checklist are not an exhaustive list of the items an inspector may examine.

Documents and records

You must produce all business records and documents requested by the inspector. Since business records are not always kept on the premises, an inspector may schedule an inspection in advance so you can make sure the records are at the business for the inspection. Sometimes, the inspector may require that you provide additional records at a later date. Refusing to provide records or providing false or misleading information is a serious contravention of the law.

Appendix A - Inspection Checklist

The following are the types of types of things that the inspector is checking during an inspection of your business. This is not a comprehensive list and not all items on this list are inspected during each inspection.

 Licence #: _____ Date of inspection: _____				
Question	TRAVEL INDUSTRY INSPECTION REPORT	Y	N	N/A
BUSINESS MODEL				
1	Is the business licensed as a Travel Agent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Is the business licensed as a Travel Wholesaler?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Does the workspace appear to be adequate to accommodate the business's requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Does the business have an IATA number or TIDS number?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	If IATA or TIDS, list numbers:			
6	Does the business have a merchant debit/credit card account that allows it to accept deposit of funds into its bank account(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Does the business accept cash or cheque as payment for services sold? If so what percentage of total business?			
LICENCE				
8	TIR 5(1) Are all locations where licensee conducts business licensed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	TIR 8 Is the licence for the location prominently displayed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROHIBITED AND REGULATED ACTS OR PRACTICES				
10	TIR 9(1)(a) has the licensee received the approval of the Director to conduct business from a non-permanent place of business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question	TRAVEL INDUSTRY INSPECTION REPORT	Y	N	N/A
11	TIR 9(1)(c) Is the licensee only conducting business in their registered name or DBA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	TIR 9(1)(d) Has the licensee ensured they are not conducting business in a name that indicates sponsorship, approval, status affiliation or connection that the licensee does not have?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	TIR 9(1)(e) Has the licensee ensured they are not knowingly conducting business in BC with a travel agent or wholesaler who is not licensed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	TIR 9(2) Has the licensee ensured their employees and agents have not used a personal credit card to pay for travel services on behalf of customer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	TIR 9(3) Has the licensee included their licence number in all visual advertisements respecting the business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
REPORTING TO DIRECTOR				
16	TIR 10(1)(a) Has the licensee reported any change of business address in writing to the Director within 14 days of the change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	TIR 10(1)(b)(i)(ii) If a corporation, has the licensee reported any change of senior corporate officers or beneficial ownership of business shares in writing to the Director, within 14 days of change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	TIR 10(1)(c) Has the licensee reported any change of partners to the Director in writing, within 14 days of the change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	TIR 10(1)(d) Has the licensee reported any change in name of company to the Director, within 14 days of the change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	TIR 10(2) Has the licensee reported to the Director any cessation of business activity with another licensee because of its failure to fulfill financial commitments made to the licensee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	TIR 12(5)(b) Has the licensee notified the Director of any change to the fiscal year end date for the business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECORDS				
22	TIR 11(1) Is the licensee maintaining proper records of account that set out all financial, commercial and corporate transactions of its business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	TIR 11(2) If the licensee's head office is not in BC, is the licensee able to provide copies of all records that set out all financial, commercial and, corporate transactions of its business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECEIPTS				
24	TIR 12.1(a) Do receipts issued for payments or refunds for travel services include the date the payment or refund is received/given?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question	TRAVEL INDUSTRY INSPECTION REPORT	Y	N	N/A
25	TIR 12.1(b) Do receipts issued for payments or refunds for travel services include the name and address of the person who made payment or received the refund?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	TIR 12.1(c) Do receipts issued for payments or refunds include the amount received or refunded and any outstanding balance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	TIR 12.1(d) Do receipts issued for payments or refunds include a description of the services to be supplied, including the dates on which travel services are to be supplied?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	TIR 12.1(e) Do receipts issued for payments or refunds for travel services include an itemized purchase price for the travel services to be supplied/refunded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	TIR 12.1(f) Do receipts issued for payments or refunds include the conditions for reimbursement of any money received?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	TIR 12.1(g) Do receipts issued for payments or refunds include the licensee's name, address telephone number and licence number?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRUST ACCOUNTS (Travel Wholesalers)				
31	TIR 12.1(h) If the licensee is a travel wholesaler, do receipts issued for payment of travel services state that the licensee will deposit the payment into a trust account?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	TIR 13(1) Does the licensee maintain a trust account with a savings institution in BC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	List name and address of financial Institution and trust bank account number(s):			
34	TIR 13(2) Is the licensee's trust account designated as "travel trust account" in bank statements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35	TIR 13(3) Does licensee deposit all money received in the course of business for travel services into the trust account?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36	TIR 13(5) Does licensee only disburse funds from trust account for payment to suppliers, expenditures on behalf of a customer, refunds, reimbursement or, money earned after suppliers paid?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37	TIR 13(6) Does the licensee keep current records of deposits, disbursements, and balances for each customer's funds deposited into the trust account?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38	Was a Certificate of Inspection sent to licensee after the inspection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information about your obligations as a licensed business, our processes and our organization, please visit www.consumerprotectionbc.ca.