



TOURISM COUNCIL OF BHUTAN

TOURISM SERVICES UNDER THE NEW NORMAL

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES | SEPTEMBER 2021

"Welcome to the Kingdom of Bhutan"



Disclaimer:

This document provides operational guidelines on tourism services under the new normal and the minimum requirements to help ensure safety and confidence for conducting tourism businesses and activities amid COVID-19 pandemic. However, the standards and protocols may change overtime as the nature of the pandemic evolves. As such, it is important for all parties to keep updated with the latest standards and protocols.



Foreword



Under the extraordinary leadership of His Majesty The King and the whole of the Nation approach, the Kingdom of Bhutan is writing a remarkable success story in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. With only three deaths, around 2,500 cases and 95 percent of its adult population vaccinated, Bhutan is one of the world's quickest inoculated nations. While the world is still confronting the pandemic, it is also slowly and steadily preparing to welcome the visitors.

In this context, the Tourism Council of Bhutan is happy to publish and share the operational guideline for tourism service under the new normal .

Bhutan was ranked number one destination for 2020 by the Lonely Planet and we hope to continue this recognition for many more years by making your stay and travel with us here in Bhutan a once in a lifetime experience. We are happy to welcome you to experience something uniquely different.

Come and experience "Happiness is a Place. "

Tashi Delek!

Dorji Dhradhul
Director General
Tourism Council of Bhutan





ABTO

*Association for Bhutanese
Tour Operators*

PPE

Personal Protective Equipment

DoC

Department of Culture

RSTA

*Road Safety
& Transport Authority*

DoI

Department of Immigration

RT-PCR

*Reverse Transcription
Polymerase Chain Reaction*

GAB

Guide Association of Bhutan

HAB

Handicraft Association of Bhutan

SOP

Standard Operating Procedure

HRAB

*Hotel & Restaurant
Association of Bhutan*

TAG

Technical Advisory Group

MDPR

Minimum Daily Package Rate

TCB

Tourism Council of Bhutan

MoH

Ministry of Health

USD

United States Dollar

MFA

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

VHS

Village Homestays



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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges and impacts across the globe with tourism being one of the severely impacted sectors. Travel restrictions were introduced after the detection of the first imported positive case on March 5, 2020 in the country. COVID-19 safety measures and protocols were implemented for the general public as well as for incoming individuals (Bhutanese and foreigners) with mandatory quarantine and testing requirements. However, with the successful vaccination of more than 95% of eligible population, and with the first tourist visiting the country on August 9, 2021, Bhutan is gearing towards new normal tourism.

This document provides details on new normal tourism, the entry procedure, operational guidelines for tourism service providers for facilitating tourist visitations under COVID-19 protocol. Among others, the following are the objectives of the document:

1. To carry out tourism activities in compliance with health and safety protocols;
2. To guide and prepare tourism service providers for the new normal tourism in concurrence to health and safety protocols; and
3. Create awareness and disseminate relevant information on new normal tourism under existing COVID-19 protocol.

This document is for the tourism stakeholders, tourism service providers and relevant governmental agencies.



PART A:

ENTRY PROCEDURE AND OTHER PROTOCOLS

CHAPTER 1: ENTRY PROCEDURE TO THE COUNTRY



Tour booking

1. Tourists must contact a licensed Bhutanese tour operator to arrange their tour to Bhutan. The list of licensed tour operators are provided at: www.bhutan.travel/tour-operators
2. Tourists with full vaccination will have to stay in facility quarantine for 14 days while those who have not taken the vaccination (or incomplete vaccination) will observe the 21-day mandatory quarantine.
3. Tourists are requested to discuss the cancellation & refund policies with the tour operator prior to travel.

Visa application procedure for MDPR paying tourists

1. Bhutanese tour operators will apply for a visa on behalf of the tourist to Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB).
2. Tourists will be required to obtain an online visa before arrival.
3. Visa fee of USD 40 will be applicable and visas will be issued for 1 month.
4. The following are mandatory for processing visa:
 - a. Applications as well as extensions thereof to be channeled through Tashel Online system.
 - b. Application forms to be complete in all respects and incomplete application will be rejected.
 - c. Applications endorsed by TCB will be approved by the Department of Immigration (DoI). However, the Bhutanese tour operators should get prior approval for the detailed travel itinerary from relevant authorities and agencies.
 - d. Fees will be collected along with tour payments.
 - e. Submission of other supporting documents specified by relevant authorities.
5. Visa will be endorsed on a case by case basis and on approval by Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Ministry of Health (MoH).
6. Tourists need to pay other fees and charges.
7. Bhutanese tour operators will process other required permits.

E-permit application procedure for non-MDPR paying tourists

1. A Bhutanese tour operator will apply for e-permit on behalf of the tourist to TCB.
2. All tourists will be required to obtain an online e-permit before arrival.
3. The following are mandatory for processing e-permit
 - a. Applications as well as extensions thereof to be channeled through Tashel Online system.
 - b. Application forms to be complete in all respects and any incomplete application will be rejected.
 - c. Applications endorsed by TCB will be approved by the Department of Immigration.
 - d. Submission of other supporting documents specified by relevant authorities.
4. E-permit will be endorsed on case by case basis and on approval of TAG, MoH.
5. Tourists need to pay other fees and charges.
6. Bhutanese tour operators will process other required permits.



Airline requirement

1. Any airline operating flights to Bhutan will check tourists for valid visas and negative RT-PCR test reports taken 72 hours before departure for allowing them to board the flight.
2. All flights operating to Bhutan are required to consult Aviation Authority on the health protocols that need to be adhered to.

Health authority requirements

1. A negative RT-PCR test report taken 72 hours prior to boarding the flight to Bhutan.
2. All tourists undergo a RT-PCR test between 6-7 days after arrival.
3. All tourists to undergo a RT-PCR test on completion of the quarantine.

CHAPTER 2: PROCEDURE AT THE AIRPORT



Airport arrival

1. All tourists follow COVID-19 protocols at the airport.
2. All tourists/airport staff should maintain physical distance of at least 1 meter at all times.
3. All tourists to undergo temperature screening through thermal scanners and if anyone with signs and symptoms to undergo RT-PCR test.
4. Disinfecting procedures to be in place for all arrivals, luggage and travel documents.
5. All tourists follow additional requirements recommended by airport authorities.

Health/Immigration counters

1. All tourists fill in the health declaration form and submit to the health counters at the airport.
2. Immigration/Health officers will check all mandatory documents of tourists including visa, e-permit, RT-PCR report, travel/COVID-19 insurance, and other requirements.
3. For additional information refer the MoH website at www.moh.gov.bt and <https://www.gov.bt>

Common facilities used by tourists (washrooms, lobby areas, etc)

1. Make sure the safe distance of 1 meter is maintained at all times.
2. Regularly disinfect the frequently touched areas using standard and quality disinfectants.
3. Common facilities should be washed and disinfected as per the health guidelines.
4. Ensure convenient availability of hand sanitizers in the common areas of the airport.

Tourist information center

1. Have a dedicated official at the tourist information center in Paro.
2. Provide information on COVID-19 safety measures.
3. Provide reliable and clear information on online banking facilities and services.
4. Distribute relevant promotional collaterals.
5. Assist those needing help with general information.

CHAPTER 3: ARRIVAL AIRPORT TRANSFER AND TRAVEL OPTIONS

Airport transfers

1. Government will arrange designated escort vehicles for tourists to transfer individuals from airport to facility quarantine.
2. Identify designated parking for the airport transfer vehicles at the airport.
3. Designated officials should be provided with the uniform, so that they can be easily identifiable.
4. Designated containment facilities should be provided for the officials.



Airport transfer vehicle

1. Will have proper signage.
2. Will operate at 50% capacity.
3. Will have seats arranged and marked accordingly to ensure safe distance between the passengers.

Airport transfer officials

1. The officials should stay in the containment facilities.
2. Officials should wear the uniform provided at all times.
3. Officials should wear masks and maintain at least 1 meter at all times.
4. Officials should ensure that luggage is fully disinfected prior to handling.

CHAPTER 4: ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES



Facility quarantine

1. Hoteliers/accommodation providers used as facility quarantine are required to follow the latest Guidance and SOP on Quarantine for COVID-19.
2. Tourists pay for the facility quarantine as per the rate prescribed by the government.
3. Tourists pay for all the COVID-19 tests and other medical expenses during their stay in the facility quarantine, as per the government regulations.



USE FACE MASK



CLEAN & DISINFECT



WASH YOUR HANDS
FREQUENTLY



AVOID TOUCHING
EYES, NOSE OR MOUTH



KEEP DISTANCE
FROM OTHERS

Post-quarantine accommodation

1. Hoteliers/accommodation providers hosting tourists after the mandatory quarantine are required to comply with the SOP for the tourism service providers issued by TCB.

PART B:

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR TOURISM SERVICE PROVIDER

INTRODUCTION

This standard operating procedure (SOP) is developed to guide the tourism service providers to operate in the "new normal era," when the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic improves. Although adapted from various practices implemented around the world, this document is designed to suit the Bhutanese context.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this SOP is to make the residents and visitors feel safe and comfortable while on tour. In addition, the following are the objectives of the SOP:

1. To guide and prepare tourism service providers for the new normal tourism in concurrence to health and safety protocols;
2. To implement "clean and safe" certification of tourism service providers to create safe environment for tourism activities;
3. To raise awareness and build capacity of tourism service providers in health and safety protocols to prevent transmission of COVID-19; and
4. To monitor compliance of tourism service providers with the generic guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures.

SCOPE

This document is intended to be used by the tourism service providers. A tourism service provider interested to host tourists during the "new normal" era must adopt this SOP as an interim measure till the Royal Government of Bhutan advises otherwise.

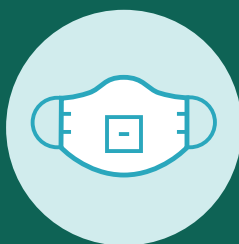
GENERIC PREVENTIVE MEASURES

These measures include simple health measures that must be followed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. All tourism stakeholders must strictly follow these measures at all times. The measures are as follows:

- a) **Physical distancing** of at least 1 meter to be followed at all times.
- b) Mandatory use of **face masks** at all times.
- c) Practice frequent **hand washing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizers.
- d) **Cough etiquettes** need to be followed strictly and this involves strict practice of covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing.



PHYSICAL DISTANCING



FACE MASK



WASH HANDS



COUGH ETIQUETTES

CHAPTER 1: CLEAN AND SAFE CERTIFICATION

The purpose of "Clean and Safe" certification is to enable tourism establishments to demonstrate that they are safe, clean and ready to serve customers and that the employees have been trained on health and safety protocols. The certification will be a mandatory prerequisite for all tourism service providers to open their services to tourists. The tourism service providers must fulfill the following conditions in order to be certified:

1. All physical structures and facilities should be assessed by a team authorized by the Tourism Council of Bhutan; and
2. Staff in key positions must be trained and certified on health and safety protocols.



Certification process

The following process shall be followed in the assessment of service providers for "Clean and Safe" certification:

A. Accommodation providers and tourist standard restaurants

1. Submit an application addressed to the Director General, Tourism Council of Bhutan along with the following documents:
 - i. Self-assessed 'clean and safe' checklist;
 - ii. Staff list (Staff must have undergone training on health and safety protocols of TCB/MoH); and
 - iii. Pictorial evidence of health protocol set-up at the work-place based on the SOPs issued by TCB/MoH.
2. The Tourism Council of Bhutan will correspond to the applicant on the date of assessment and dispatch a team for assessment.
3. The team shall conduct field assessment and share reports with TCB for review after which it will be shared with the applicants.
4. A 'clean and safe' certificate will be awarded to those service providers fulfilling the requirements of Tourism Council of Bhutan.

B. Tour Operators and tourist guides

1. Tour Operators and tourist guides must undergo online training and obtain certain percentage to be certified.



Training

Training is an important component of the "Clean and Safe" certification program. The training on the basic health and safety measures for tourism service providers shall be developed by the Ministry of Health, Tourism Council of Bhutan and other relevant authorities. Staff in key positions must be identified for training as per the requirements in the SOP and checklist.

The training would be provided using a combination of face to face and online options. Contents shall be developed specific to each stakeholder and those undergoing the training must acquire a minimum score for successful completion of the training.

CHAPTER 2: GUIDELINES AND CHECKLISTS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS



All the tourism service providers must be trained and certified as "Clean and Safe" in order to provide services. For each service provider, generic guidelines and checklists are developed based on which the assessment shall be carried out. The Tourism Service Providers must meet the minimum requirements of Standard Operating Procedure. The following are the generic guidelines for the tourism service providers:

1. TOUR OPERATOR

General guidelines:

- i. The general preventive measure (physical distancing, facemasks, hand washing/sanitization and coughing etiquettes) must be followed;
- ii. Tour operators must ensure the guides and drivers are provided with a list of "do's and don'ts" and thoroughly brief them before each tour;
- iii. Tour operators must ensure guides have a list of helplines and refer suspected cases to the nearest health center;
- iv. The tour guides shall be trained how to recognize COVID-19 symptoms and report any suspected case to the National Surveillance Team of MoH;
- v. Tour operators should arrange recommended basic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and distribute them to their staff and guests, as and when required;
- vi. Tour operators should instruct and ensure that the guides and drivers refrain from close contacts (shaking hands, hugging and offering welcome dhar) during the guest reception;
- vii. Tour operators should use digital technology for sharing information, tour itineraries and make digital payments in order to discourage physical contact;
- viii. The use of Druk Trace app must be mandated while visiting attraction sites, restaurants, hotels, etc;
- ix. Tour operators should contact the attraction sites and arrange timing of visits to avoid overcrowding;
- x. Regular monitoring must be conducted by the company management and periodic monitoring shall be conducted by sector associations, TCB and relevant authorities.

Checklist

The tour operators must fulfill ALL the requirements given in the checklist below:

Area	Requirements	Remarks (Yes/No)
Office	1. The Tour operator's office must be arranged with proper physical distancing measures and equipped with temperature scanning, QR code and hand sanitizers/hand washing facilities.	
	2. Ensure there is enough basic Personal Protective Equipment (face masks, gloves, and hand gel) for employees and tourists.	
	3. Must maintain a list of emergency contact numbers and provide it to guides and drivers on tour.	
	4. Use digital technology for sharing information, tour itineraries and cashless transactions where possible.	
Tourists	1. Ensure tourists are informed on the pre-entry requirements.	
	2. Communicate and brief tourists on safety and health screening procedures as well as COVID-19 control guidelines in Bhutan.	
	3. Ensure tourists have enough basic PPE	
	4. Ensure the tourists undergo required quarantine period (unless exempted) and take mandatory COVID-19 test upon entry, during quarantine period, or before the departure as required by the destination country.	
General	1. Brief guides and drivers on "do's and don'ts."	
	2. Provide enough basic PPE to guides and drivers.	
	3. Ensure tourists and guides/drivers use Druk Trace app wherever required.	
	4. Ensure that the same designated vehicle and driver is used for airport transfers and tour programs.	

2. ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS

In order for the accommodation providers to cater to tourists, the facility must be certified as Clean and safe. Star rated hotels including tented accommodation, non-star rated hotels (budget hotels) and Village Homestays (VHS) are the accommodations that can cater to tourists.



2.1 HOTELS

General guidelines:

1. Those hotels which were used as quarantine center must be disinfected and safe for occupancy;
2. Employees should always practice the general preventive measures. Employers should ensure adequate PPEs are provided to all the employees;
3. High touch areas or surfaces must be frequently cleaned/disinfected;
4. Contact relevant toll free number if a guest develops COVID-19 signs and symptoms;
5. The guest rooms must be kept clean and well-ventilated with basic amenities provided;
6. Only 80% of the rooms can be occupied with provision for isolation of guest suspected for COVID-19;
7. Restaurant's capacity should be reduced to 80% of the total capacity to ensure safe distancing;
8. A staff in every department must attend the training on COVID-19 safety protocol; and
9. Regular monitoring must be conducted by the company management and periodic monitoring must be conducted by sector association, TCB and relevant authorities.



Checklist

Area	Requirements	Remarks (Yes/No)
Before entrance	At the guest drop/pick area or any suitable area, hotel management should have a simple set up to carry out disinfection of luggage.	
	Generic preventive measures must be observed by the concierge on guest arrival.	
Entrance	At the entrance, a dedicated safe space should be set up with the following facilities:	
	a. Table and a chair	
	b. Temperature gun to conduct thermal screening	
	c. Hand washing/sanitizing facilities	
	d. Druk Trace QR code or manual contact tracing registration.	
	e. Staff must wear gloves, facemask and face shields	
	There should be separate entry and exit routes. However, if it is not possible, the floors should be marked for one-way pedestrian flow with physical barriers installed.	
	Install signage at the entrance to remind guests to follow COVID-19 safety protocols.	
Reception	Reception area should have a clear approach path marked for maintaining 1 meter distance.	
	Online check-in/out facilities should be in place to avoid physical contact.	
	Use of digital payments to discourage physical contact.	
	Staff must stay behind plexiglass boards or wear face shields to prevent droplet transmission. Staff must also wear hand gloves at all times.	
	Reception desk should have immediately available telephone numbers of health authorities and medical centers.	

Area	Requirements	Remarks (Yes/No)
Guest Room	Rooms with adequate ventilation should be offered to the guest.	
	Only a maximum of 80% of rooms can be occupied.	
	An isolation room must be identified for every 10 rooms to transfer guests if they show any signs of COVID-19 symptoms.	
	Rooms should be clean with only basic amenities provided. Other decorative and non-essential items should be removed but amenities must be provided on request.	
	All furniture, equipment and devices have to be disinfected on a daily basis (disinfecting schedule of the hotel must be developed).	
	Sanitizers or hand washing facilities, garbage and laundry bags should be placed in the room.	
	Rooms must be serviced on alternate days. Turn down service to be temporarily suspended.	
Toilet	Toilets should be clean with all functional fittings.	
	Toilet must be equipped with soap/shampoo at all times with 24 hours running water (hot and cold).	
	Dust bin with disposable garbage bags must be kept at all times.	
Kitchen, Restaurants and bar	Kitchen, restaurant & bar space should be kept clean and hygiene maintained at all times.	
	Restaurant capacity should be reduced to 80% of the total capacity to ensure safe distancing.	
	Tables should be arranged such that the distance from the back of one chair to another shall be 1 meter apart.	
	Buffet and self-serving services should be offered in strict compliance with the safety measures.	
	Waste segregation and proper disposal of wastes should be practiced.	
	Staff in the dining and kitchen must maintain personal hygiene with proper attire and effective hair restraints.	

Area	Requirements	Remarks (Yes/No)
Common areas and business center	Seating arrangements in all public areas, including the lobby, restaurants, banquets, and the swimming pool area, must be reduced to follow social distancing norms.	
	Sanitizer dispensers to be made available across public areas for guest	
	Staircase railings and walls should be marked "Please Avoid Touching" to encourage minimal touch.	
	Elevators must be marked and operate at 80% capacity.	
Staff	Hotels must submit a list of all the employees who will be providing services to the guest. All the staff must be daily screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.	
	All staff must be vaccinated and undergo COVID-19 testing as per the requirements of the Ministry of Health.	
	Staff in key positions must be trained on health safety protocols and follow the protocols diligently.	
	The hotel must have a designated COVID-19 Safety Focal Staff to monitor the implementation of these SOP on a daily basis to ensure safety measures at the workplace.	

2.2 VILLAGE HOMESTAYS

General guidelines:

1. Facility must be "Clean and Safe" Certified.
2. A family member must undergo training/orientation on health safety protocols.
3. Hand Washing/sanitizing facilities must be in place.
4. Generic prevention must be practiced with Druktrace QR code displayed at the entrance of the house.
5. Undergo COVID-19 test and vaccination, as required by the government regulations.

Checklist

sl no	Requirements	Remarks (Yes/No)
1	Easily accessible hand washing facilities should be installed at the appropriate locations and should be functional and equipped with soap/detergent at all times.	
2	Use Druk Trace QR code or manual registry.	
3	Toilets should be clean with all functional fittings and must be equipped with soap and water (hot and cold) available 24hrs.	
4	The family members must wear face masks at all times.	
5	A family member must have undergone training/briefing on health safety protocols.	
6	Family members must undergo required COVID-19 test and vaccination.	

3. TOURIST STANDARD RESTAURANT

Guidelines:

All tourist standard restaurants must ensure strict compliance with the COVID-19 protocols when providing their services. Some of the basic guidelines are, but not limited to, as follows:

1. Ensure all COVID-19 protocols are followed by the staff as well as the guests at all times.
2. Any sick staff should be relieved from their duty and made to stay at home.
3. Encourage takeaway and food deliveries instead of dine-in options.
4. Disinfect and clean all frequently touched objects.
5. Equipment, containers and utensils should be cleaned thoroughly before and after use
6. Attend all available trainings and awareness sessions on COVID-19.
7. All cleaning equipment such as cloth, mops and protective gears should be cleaned and disinfected after every use and before using in other areas.
8. All staff should wear proper protective gears while on duty.
9. Should ensure all arrangements specified in the checklist below are put in place.

Checklist

sl no	Requirements	Remarks (Yes/No)
1	The entrance areas must have a hand washing station or hand sanitizer.	
2	Use Druk Trace QR code or manual registry.	
3	Kitchen, restaurant & bar space should be kept clean and hygiene maintained at all times.	
4	Restaurant capacity should be reduced to 80% of the total capacity to ensure safe distancing of at least 1 meter between two chairs.	
5	Ensure proper ventilation.	
6	Buffet and self-serving services should be offered in strict compliance with the safety measures.	
7	Waste segregation and proper disposal of wastes should be practiced.	
8	Staff in the dining and kitchen must maintain personal hygiene with proper attire and effective hair restraints.	



4. TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS (DRIVERS)

Guidelines:

Transportation providers come directly in contact with guests and must ensure to comply with the following guidelines and "do's and don'ts" developed as per this guideline.

1. The vehicle designated for guests should comply with COVID-19 related RSTA regulations;
2. The generic preventive measures must be strictly followed;
3. Register in Check Post Management System (CPMS) as per existing regulations;
4. The designated vehicle used for airport transfers and tour programs should be used for the same travelling group; and
5. The transportation providers must abide by the "do's and don'ts" as follows:

Do's and Don'ts

	
<p>Vehicles must follow the seating capacity as per the RSTA regulations.</p> <p>Always follow the generic preventive measures.</p> <p>Register on Check Post Management System whenever required.</p> <p>Visit the hospital if there are signs and symptoms of COVID-19.</p> <p>Produce COVID-19 negative test certificate and vaccination certificate to the tour operators before assuming duty.</p> <p>Drivers must keep vehicle windows open to the extent possible.</p>	<p>Don't socialize with the public or community while on duty.</p> <p>Don't change the driver or vehicle unless in unavoidable circumstances.</p> <p>Don't come to work if sick or have signs and symptoms of COVID-19.</p> <p>Don't hug, shake hands or any other body gesture which would violate physical distancing norms.</p>

(The tour operator may add more provisions to the above list to make the list comprehensive)

5. TOUR GUIDES

Guidelines:

Guides must play a crucial role in ensuring the safety of both tourists and the public. The followings are some broad guidelines for the guides to follow:

1. Guides should ensure that COVID-19 safety protocols are being followed by the tourists during the tour operations and must ensure that guests are not taken to public places;
2. The guides must accompany the tourists at all times;
3. If a guest shows any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, they should immediately refer to flu clinic; and
4. Guides must attend necessary briefing/training on health safety protocols.
5. Guides must strictly abide by "do's and don'ts" as follows:

Do's and Don'ts

	
<p>Always follow the generic preventive measures and ensure the tourists also do the same.</p> <p>Take the tourists on tour as per the approved tour itinerary.</p> <p>Ensure the tourists stay in “clean and safe” certified accommodations only.</p> <p>Must ensure that guests carry and use basic PPE at all times.</p> <p>Should ensure that tourists have downloaded Druk Trace App and scan the QR codes wherever required.</p> <p>Visit nearest flu clinic if there are any signs and symptoms of COVID-19.</p> <p>Produce COVID-19 negative test certificate and vaccination certificate to the tour operators before assuming duty.</p>	<p>Don't take tourists to public places restricted by the government.</p> <p>Don't socialize with the public or community while on duty.</p> <p>Don't share food from the same plate or water from the same container.</p> <p>Don't hug, shake hands or any other body gesture which would violate physical distancing norms.</p> <p>Don't come to work if sick or have signs and symptoms of COVID-19.</p>

(The tour operator may add more provisions to the above list to make the list comprehensive)

6. TOURIST ATTRACTION SITES

Guidelines:

1. The attraction sites must be equipped with hand sanitizers/hand washing facilities and physical distancing barriers;
2. Druk Trace App should be used for all attraction centers;
3. All the visitors must be requested to follow generic preventive measures;
4. Tourist attractions and sites should have crowd management measures in place;
5. Tourist attractions and sites should strictly follow the visitor timing;
6. Tourists must be discouraged from touching “high touch areas” such as prayer wheels, railings, door knobs, etc., and such areas must be cleaned/disinfected regularly; and
7. Periodic monitoring shall be conducted by relevant authorities, LGs, Dzongkhags and Thromdes.

7. HANDICRAFTS



General guidelines:

1. Hand washing facilities/hand sanitizers must be arranged at the entrance of the shop;
2. Druk Trace app or maintain the record of visitors;
3. The shop shall be marked to ensure physical distancing;
4. Encourage customer to use digital payment;
5. The prices of all the products must be displayed on the board to minimize interactions with the customers;
6. Provide pre-packaging of products to decrease physical contact.

The handcraft shops shall be regulated like any other shops and therefore, the certification is not required. However, periodic monitoring shall be conducted by relevant authorities.

8. TREKKING



General guidelines:

1. Trekking must be organized in the designated trek routes.
2. Trekkers must use designated campsites;
3. Guests and staff must follow generic preventive measures;
4. In case of any signs and symptoms, health helpline must be contacted for advice;
5. Guides must advise on COVID-19 safety protocols to other service providers such as horse contractors, porters, cooks, etc;
6. Guides must ensure the trekking team does not mingle with the public, communities and other trekking groups; and
7. Periodic monitoring shall be conducted by relevant authorities.

CHAPTER 3:

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Monitoring of tourism service providers is important to ensure safety of both the tourists and public. While conducting monitoring, feedback from tourists as well as the service providers must be collected to improve the system. Three levels of monitoring shall be instituted so that tour operations are conducted in a clean, safe and comfortable manner:

INTERNAL MONITORING

The management of the tourism service providers shall conduct regular monitoring, depending on the need. For instance, hotels must conduct daily monitoring of the services while the tour operators can conduct weekly monitoring of guides and drivers. A format for internal monitoring must be developed by the management and a monitoring report must be produced to the relevant authorities during periodic monitoring.

MONITORING BY SECTOR ASSOCIATION

The Sector Association must play an active role in monitoring the establishments under them. This would not only help in enforcing health safety protocols but also inculcate a sense of ownership of the program and responsibility for the service providers under the association. The sector association must conduct weekly monitoring and share the report with relevant authorities.

MONITORING BY RELEVANT AUTHORITIES

In addition to the internal monitoring and monitoring by sector associations, the governmental authorities shall conduct monitoring of tourism service providers and attraction sites to reinforce the seriousness of the implementation of the health safety protocols. A monitoring on a monthly basis may be conducted by TCB, LGs and other relevant authorities.

FINES AND PENALTIES

Fines and Penalties shall be levied as per the existing Tourism Rules and Regulations, Ministry of Health regulations, and other national regulations.

ANNEXURE I: CLEAN AND SAFE CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE NO.: XXXXXXXX

EXPIRATION DATE: XX-XX-XXXX



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

HOTEL XYZ

HAS MET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE "CLEAN AND SAFE CERTIFICATION" STANDARDS



TOURISM COUNCIL OF BHUTAN

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