

## Market Ready Standards

Destination BC in partnership with the tourism industry developed a set of market ready criteria to assist BC's tourism industry to remain competitive with other national and international tourism destinations. The Market Ready Standards have been broken down into 3-categories of "readiness" to assist tourism-related businesses in progressively increasing the quality and professionalism of their operation.

### Visitor Ready

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These criteria are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer "visitor ready" product to consumers.

**Visitor Ready:** Refers to a business which has all of their licenses, permits and insurance in place in order to operate legally.

#### Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as "visitor ready". The business must:

- Maintain good standing of all applicable business licenses, insurance, and legislative requirements.
- Maintain a staffed business location with a set schedule of operating hours.
- Provide a contact telephone number or email contact year-round. If closed for season, provide automated response through voicemail and or email.
- Have branded on-site signage.

#### Comments:

This is the basic level required to legally conduct business in a British Columbia community. Meeting this standard means the operator/facility qualifies for a business listing, but not necessarily cost-shared promotions.

### Market Ready

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These criteria are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer "market ready" product to consumers.

**Market Ready:** Refers to a business that markets to potential visitors; communicates with potential visitors year-round, and is ready to accept advanced reservations.

#### Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as "market ready".

The business must meet visitor ready criteria plus:

- Provide a published pricing policy.
- Have a published consumer billing, payment, and cancellation policy.
- Have marketing materials such as brochure, rack card or website.
- Have site based parking in close proximity.
- During operating season, maintain a 24-48 hour response time; or less, to inquiries and a 24 hour response time to reservation/booking requests.
- Be prepared to communicate and accept reservations by telephone, fax and/or e-mail and provide same day confirmation of booking arrangements.
- Have high resolution images and video footage for promotional and training purposes.
- Have frontline staff who are trained in customer service (such as **WorldHost**® or equivalent customer training program)
- Be an active stakeholder or eligible to become a stakeholder of your local tourism association.

#### Comments:

This is the basic level of readiness to conduct tourism operations. Meeting this standard means the operator/facility qualifies for a business listing, is entitled to participate in cost-shared promotions for local and regional markets, and is entitled to participate in out-of-province marketing programs, but not overseas markets and/or the travel trade.

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## Export Ready

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These criteria are consistent with Destination BC's export ready standards and are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer "export ready" product to international markets.

**Export Ready:** Refers to a business that markets to and through travel trade distribution sales channels, understands commission or net rate pricing, agrees to trade bookings and a cancellation policy.

### Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as "export ready". The business must meet "visitor and market ready" criteria plus:

- Be in business at least one year, with a proven track record for safe and professional operation.
- Demonstrate an adequate budget and marketing plan that includes international tourism operators.
- Understand the roles played by receptive tour operators, tour operators, travel wholesalers, and retail travel agents and understand rack or retail pricing, agent commissions and wholesale net rates at each level.
- Be willing to include receptive tour operators in your marketing and sales plan and provide contracted wholesale net rates to receptive tour operators.
- Provide detailed pricing and program information to tour operators and wholesalers at least one year in advance of selling season.
- Be prepared to set up billing arrangements with the tour operator, wholesale agency or receptive tour operator.
- If you plan to pursue group business, ensure you are able to accommodate and adapt to the needs of the market (e.g. tour bus access and parking, washroom facilities, maximum group size, group pricing, and frontline staff that speak the language of your target markets).
- Carry adequate insurance (discuss this with your receptive operator as sometimes they can add suppliers to their existing policies at nominal cost).
- Provide support (free or reduced rates) for international media and travel trade familiarization tours.
- Offer currency exchange rates consistent with industry norms.

### Comments:

This is the highest level of readiness required to reach overseas markets. Meeting this standard means the operator/facility qualifies for a business listing and is entitled to participate in all cost-shared marketing programs including programs directed at overseas markets and/or the travel trade.

# Market Ready Self-Assessment Checklist

## Self- Assessment for Visitor-Readiness *(check to indicate your company's compliance)*

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- Our company is in good standing with all applicable business licenses, insurance and legislative requirements.
- We maintain a staffed business location with a set schedule of operating hours.
- We provide a contact telephone number or email contact year-round. If closed for the season, we provide automated response through voicemail and or email.
- We have branded on-site signage.

## Self- Assessment for Market-Readiness *(check to indicate your company's compliance)*

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*In order to be deemed 'market-ready' you must meet visitor-ready criteria plus:*

- Our company provide a published pricing policy.
- We have a published consumer billing, payment, and cancellation policy.
- We have marketing materials such as brochure, rack card or website.
- We have site-based parking in close proximity.
- During operating season, we maintain a 24- to 48-hour response time or less to enquiries, and a 24-hour response time to reservation/booking requests.
- We are prepared to communicate and accept reservations by telephone, fax and/or email and provide same day confirmation of booking arrangements.
- We have high-resolution images and/or video footage for promotional and training purposes.
- We are an active stakeholder or are eligible to become a stakeholder of the local tourism association.

## Self- Assessment for Export-Readiness *(check to indicate your company's compliance)*

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*In order to be deemed 'export-ready' you must meet visitor- and market-ready criteria plus:*

- Our company has been in business at least one year, and has a proven track record for safe and professional operation.
- We have an adequate budget and marketing plan that includes international tourism operators.
- We understand the roles played by receptive tour operators, tour operators/travel wholesalers, and retail travel agents, and understand rack or retail pricing, agent commissions and wholesale net rates at each level.
- We are willing to include receptive tour operators in your marketing and sales plan. Be willing to provide contracted wholesale net rates to receptive tour operators.
- We can provide detailed pricing and program information to tour operators at least one year in advance of selling season.
- We are prepared to set up billing arrangements with the operator, agency or receptive tour operator.
- We are interested to pursue group business, and can ensure we have the ability to accommodate and adapt to the needs of the market (e.g. tour bus access and parking, washroom facilities, group pricing, maximum group size, and frontline staff who speak the language of target markets).
- We carry adequate insurance (discuss this with your receptive operator, as sometimes he/she can add suppliers to existing policies at nominal cost).
- We provide support (free or reduced rates) for international media and travel trade familiarization tours.
- We offer currency exchange rates consistent with industry norms.