

## Booking, Cancellation and Change Policy

A booking and cancellation policy is a means in which a business shows how it operates when accepting payment for confirmed services. It provides the buyer with the information they need to determine if they should make a reservation now or later, or at all.

Booking policies vary from sector to sector and business to business.

When working with Outbound Tour Operators or Receptive/Inbound Tour Operators, you may need to accommodate their requirements as they are usually not in a position to send payments to each supplier at “time of booking”. Rather they may schedule payments with you on a monthly basis or end of season, etc.

They may and most often sell numerous destinations. They often have accounting offices that issue all of their payments to their suppliers and partners at scheduled times.

Even though you will negotiate your policy with your trade partners, and may have to negotiate with each one independently, it’s important to maintain your own policy for your consumer direct and travel agent bookings. It is also critical that you remember what you negotiated with each company so there is no misunderstanding when it comes time to collecting and invoicing for payments.

Changes are bound to occur when a consumer or tour operator is trying to build a vacation that is multi-day and includes various locations and services. It can’t be expected that every component in the itinerary will match-up on the first try. Components may be sold out on the date that fit within the itinerary, however they may be available a day or two later, but in order to guarantee that space they need to “hold” it with a reservation. They now may need to change everything in the itinerary by two days. In many cases flights to /from Yukon is the determining factor in when the clients will travel. As we all know, vacation travellers look for the best flight deals or “points” availability.

In Yukon the majority of visitors are on multi-day or multi-week itineraries that may include Alaska. Your service or product will only be one of the many components in their travel. They need to know that they are not going to lose their money by booking a component to secure the space, while they figure out the rest of the itinerary. If you indicate a non-refundable deposit at time of booking, you may be losing a potential sale while they work on the rest of their itinerary. It is recommended to give some leeway when requesting deposits. Depending on the demand for the product this may or may not be feasible. You need to determine what you can accommodate.

To help decide what your booking and cancellation policy should be, consider some of these questions:

- Do I own and control all the components in my product?
- Do I need to pay my suppliers non- refundable costs?
- How much time do I really need to pull together this tour departure and what do I have to secure in advance? ( guides, caterers, boats, planes, etc) What are their policies?
- Do I need minimum group numbers?
- What happens if someone cancels and my minimum number decreases?
- What happens if someone cancels the day before the tour?
- What happens if I am unable to provide the tour due to unforeseen circumstances? (ie, boat motor dies, accident in my personal family, animals are sick, weather is not cooperating ,etc)
- Is this policy fair for the purchaser?
- Is this policy industry standard and what consumers or travel trade recognize and expect?

In order to ensure that you have the information you require to secure the clients booking and there is no confusion when they arrive about bed type confirmed vs bed type expected, ability of clients, etc, you need to request pertinent information:

- Flight times and date of arrival and departure
- Number of persons travelling in the party
- Names of persons in the party ( in many cases you may need to obtain full legal names including children, dates of birth and citizenship, as noted on their passport)\*
- Preferred room type: single, double, twin, triple or quad.
- Number of rooms required (don't assume based on the names provided that they need two beds or only one queen)
- Special requests; smoking or non, handicap accessible, special dietary needs, etc

\*Requirement for Alaska Marine Ferry and Whitepass and Yukon Route Railway tours that cross border into Canada and return to Alaska or begin in Canada and end in Skagway.

Below are a few **examples** of policies used in the tourism industry. These vary from supplier to supplier and are presented here as a reference for you when determining your requirements.

## **Tour Company; Outbound, Inbound or Receptive Tour Operator**

A credit card is required to confirm and hold your reservation. No charges will incur on your credit card until you receive confirmation of all components in your tour. Payment will be automatically applied to your credit card as noted below. *Note: You will be required to sign a credit card authorization form in order to process your request. This form will be sent with your confirmation.*

### **Booking and Cancellation Policy:**

- More than 60 days prior to start of tour, 10% deposit due when confirmation returned for all components.
- 60 days prior to start of tour, 50% of total payment due. Cancellations at 60 days to 45 days, deposit is non-refundable.
- 45 days prior to start of tour, final payment due. Cancellations at 45-30 days, 50% of total cost is non-refundable.
- 30 – 0 days prior to start of tour, 100% non-refundable.

### **Change Fee Policy**

Once you've received your confirmation and are invoiced for payment, any changes to existing reservations will be subject to an administration fee. In some cases due to overwhelming demand for a tour or accommodation we cannot confirm your space without incurring a cancellation fee. You will be advised of this at time of booking and this will be passed onto you as part of your change fees.

- Day Tours \$10 per change/per tour
- Tour packages of five nights or less: \$50 per person
- Tour packages over five nights: \$125 per person

Requests for changes or cancellations must be received in writing and the effective date is the date on which the written cancellation or change is received by our office either by e-mail or fax.

## Accommodation Booking and Cancellation Policy

### SAMPLE #1

#### Booking

A valid credit card is required to confirm your reservation. We accept visa, MasterCard, or American Express.

If you are booking on behalf of an individual, you will be required to have them sign a credit card authorization form for the reservation and return to us. This will be sent to you by fax or e-mail upon confirmation. If the credit card authorization form is not returned within two weeks after confirmation, the reservation will be cancelled. Charges to the credit card will not incur until check out, unless cancelled as noted below.

**Cancellation:** Please notify Hotel ABC immediately of any changes or cancellations. Reservations not cancelled by 5 p.m. local time one day prior to scheduled arrival date will be subject to charges for one night's stay. The credit card used to guarantee your reservation will be charged for the first night's stay one day prior to arrival. An invalid credit card will cancel your reservation. To change or cancel a confirmed reservation and obtain a cancellation number, please call us at 1-800-555-5544 by 5 p.m. local time one day prior to scheduled arrival date.

Should you be delayed on your arrival date you must inform us before 5p.m local time, so your reservation is not considered a "no-show" and your room released.

### SAMPLE #2

A credit card is required to guarantee your reservation. Full payment will be charged at check out.

Cancellations must be received by 6pm on day of arrival or a charge of one night will be applied to your credit card.

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**Day Tours** – depends on the market demand and how you operate and schedule your tour.

- Daily with set departures, but a minimum number required?
- On request only?
- Guaranteed scheduled departures regardless of minimum number?
- Advance booking required?
- Payment before tour starts? ( pay at the gate)
- Age requirements? (ie. children under 6 not permitted)

#### **Guaranteed Scheduled Departures, Advance Booking Required (ie. Whale Watching Tour)**

- Prices subject to 5% gst
- A 20% deposit is due 10 days after receiving your confirmation
- Full payment will be charged on day of departure and before the tour begins
- All seats need to be reserved ahead of time with a credit card number ( visa, mastercard, american express)
- We require 48 hour cancellation notice prior to confirmed tour time. Cancellations within 48 hours; deposits are non- refundable and non-changeable
- Cancellations outside of 48 hours; deposits are fully refundable and changeable subject to availability.
- All children under two years old will be required to sit on parents lap if the vessel is full.
- Departure times are subject to change without notice. Rates may vary upon increase in fuel prices. We reserve the right to cancel any trip due to weather conditions, mechanical problems or unforeseen circumstances. In that case the deposit will be refunded in full. We reserve the right to substitute vessels. All passengers will be required to sign a liability waiver prior to departure.

**Guaranteed Scheduled Departures, No Minimum Numbers, No Advance Booking Required ( ie. City Sightseeing tour)**

- Prices subject to 5% gst
- Space subject to availability on day of tour. If you wish to guarantee a certain departure time, a 10% non-refundable deposit will be required to secure your space
- Payment in the form of a valid credit card, interac ( bank card), or cash is accepted
- Full payment required before tour commences.
- You must arrive a minimum of 15 minutes prior to tour departure to guarantee a seat on the tour, space subject to availability
- Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult
- All passengers will be required to sign a liability waiver prior to departure.

**No scheduled Departures, Subject to Availability at Time of Booking, Advance Booking Required (full day guided canoe tour).**

- A valid credit card is required to confirm your reservation
- 10% non-refundable deposit required within seven days of confirmation to guarantee reservation.
- Changes to dates subject to availability
- Cancellations within 7 days of departure, 50% non-refundable
- Cancellations within 3 days of departure, 100% non-refundable
- Trips will operate rain or shine. We reserve the right to alter or cancel your trip due to unforeseen circumstances such as equipment breakage or failure, weather or water routes that are unsafe to operate in. Should we cancel your trip, you will receive a full refund