

Austin Tour Guide Association (ATGA)

DRAFT - introduced April 2006

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote the common interests of tour guides in the City of Austin and its greater metropolitan area, as well as to develop and promote tourism as a successful local industry, by:

- Keeping members abreast of current information relevant to the profession.
- Providing training in guiding-related skills that enable our members to conduct tours in a professional manner.
- Providing a forum for the discussion of issues of concern to licensed tour guides.
- Requiring adherence to a professional Code of Ethics & Business Practice for our members.
- Working with the appropriate governmental and private tourism-related organizations to resolve issues of mutual concern.
- Promoting guided touring by licensed professionals in a visitor-friendly Austin metropolitan area.
- Representing and supporting the interests of the guiding profession in general, and ATGA members in particular, in matters involving the local, national, and international communities.

ABOUT THE ATGA

The Austin Tour Guide Association was begun early in 2006 by a small group of Austin tour guides who recognized their mutual need to share information, enhance their knowledge, solve common problems, and raise awareness of their profession in the travel and tourism industry and in the local and national government. The “founding fit” each initially committed \$20 and countless hours to the concept. After many planning meetings this spring, the number of those interested in the group they had named quintupled. The first president was elected in _____. A not-for-profit organization, the ATGA had more than ____ members in June 2006 after celebrating its inception.

WHO WE ARE

Most ATGA members are professional tour guides licensed by the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. The ATGA Guides are highly educated individuals from varied backgrounds who have experience conducting tours for visitors from all over the world. ATGA Guides provide a variety of tours of the Washington metropolitan area, including city highlight tours, walking tours and specialty tours. Itineraries may last from several hours to several days. Some of our members work year-round and others work seasonally. Most conduct local tours, but some are tour managers who are qualified to lead tours in other cities and states as well. Some offer primarily student tours (80% of the business in the spring) and others provide predominately foreign-language tours in 15 languages. Some work frequently with destination management companies, performing “meet and greet” services, working at information desks, or providing a variety of specialized tours. Many tour companies and other entities providing services to tourists also are members.

ATGA Code of Ethics & Business Practice

1. A professional guide is expected to follow the rules and regulations and act accordingly at all sites and facilities where he/she takes visitors.
2. A professional guide knows and follows the policies of the company for whom the guide is working at the time. A guide does not accept or solicit a job from a client of the company that has hired him/her without the consent of the company, nor should a guide attempt to divert to another person or company business from the company that has hired him/her. All business related communication with the client should be made under the auspices of the company. It is the guide's responsibility to inquire of the tour company regarding continued service with a repeat client. Loyalty for and to the tour company should be practiced during the entire tour.
3. A professional guide accepts each tour as a serious commitment and cancels only when absolutely necessary and provides as much advance notice as possible.
4. A professional guide only solicits gratuities tactfully, humbly, and at the express permission of the company for whom he or she works..
5. A professional guide does not initiate or encourage patronage of souvenir shops and other places that offer commissions to the guide and/or drivers or abuse complimentary meal privileges offered by food establishments.
6. A professional guide cooperates with other tour groups and maintains ethical and professional conduct at all times, cultivating a positive relationship with all colleagues.
7. A professional guide respects the research, intellectual property and copyrighted material of other guides by not recording without permission or quoting it without attribution.
8. A professional guide provides skilled presentation of knowledge, interprets and highlights surroundings, informs and maintains objectivity and enthusiasm in an engaging manner.
9. A professional guide is prepared for each tour when the itinerary is furnished in advance. A professional guide assumes responsibility for reporting on time and for meeting appointments and all schedules within the guide's control. A professional guide is sensitive to the interests and values of the tour group and does not share his/her personal views on controversial subjects such as sex, religion, and politics.
10. A professional guide has a wide range of knowledge of the city, including its history and architecture, cultural and political life, and local folklore. A professional guide keeps current on new exhibits, seasonal events, and other changes throughout the city. A professional guide does not knowingly give out misinformation.
11. A professional guide maintains good personal hygiene and uses proper judgment in dressing appropriately for all tours.
12. A professional guide is knowledgeable about the best routes for all tours. This includes familiarity with the traffic laws as well as the idiosyncrasies of Austin driving. A professional guide informs the driver of the route in a calm, polite, and timely fashion.

I HEREBY AGREE TO: Abide by the ATGA's code of ethics and the regulation not to copy from, sell, or give out the ATGA Directory or Directory updates. I understand that if I do not abide by the above code and regulation, my membership in the ATGA may be terminated.

Signature _____ Date _____