
UNIT 16 TOUR GUIDE AND ESCORTS

Structure

16.0 Objectives

16.1 Introduction

16.2 Defining Guide and Tour Escorts

16.2.1 Who is a Tourist Guide?

16.2.2 Who is a Tour Escort?

16.2.3 Differentiating between Guides and Tour Escorts

16.2.4 Importance of a Tourist Guide and Escort

16.3 Types of Guides

16.3.1 Classification based on Licensing Authority

16.3.2 Classification based on Employment Contract

16.3.3 Classification based on Time Commitment

16.3.4 Classification based on Place of Guiding (Specialisation)

16.4 Role and Responsibilities of Tourist Guide

16.4.1 Ethics of Guiding

16.4.2 Role of a Tourist Guide

16.4.3 Responsibilities of a Tourist Guide

16.4.5 Qualities of an Effective Tourist Guide

16.4.6 Techniques for a Good Tour Guiding Experience

16.5 Role and Responsibilities Tour Escorts

16.6.1 Responsibilities of a Tour Escort

16.6.2 Qualities of a Tour Escorts

16.6.3 Escorting a Tour

16.6 Let Us Sum Up

16.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

16.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- identify guides and escorts,
- differentiate between a guide and tour escort,
- classify the different types of guides,
- explain the responsibilities of a guide and an tour escort;
- discuss the skills and techniques to be a successful guide; and
- describe the nuisances of tour escorting

16.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Units we have discussed the growth and development of tourism, established the importance of tourism to Modern Economies and various components of tourism. Tour Escorting and Guiding is one part of tourism industry that adds to the tourist experience. Eric Friedheim (1992) wrote that “guiding,

counseling and harboring the traveler are among the world's earliest vocations". In present times Tour escorting and guiding are one of the lucrative and at the same time complex job. Many a times the terms Tour Guide and Tour Escort are used interchangeably but they are different. In this Unit tourist guide and tour escort are defined and the difference between the two explained. This Unit also discusses the role and responsibilities of tour escort and guides, the process of tour conducting/managing, the various aspect of tour guiding as well as the skills and qualities needed to be successful in this vocation.

16.2 DEFINING TOURIST GUIDE AND TOUR ESCORTS

Most of us refer to Tourist Guide as Guide and confuse the subtle difference in the job description of a Tourist Guide with that of a Tour Escort. Due to the subtle difference in the job description, many a times the job overlaps.

16.2.1 Who is a Tourist Guide?

Tourist Guide is person who has thorough knowledge of destination or site as she/he is knowledgeable about the particular destination and its attractions. Along with the insight of a destination in terms of culture, food, flora and fauna, traditions, festival etc; the tourist guide will add his/ her own theme/ style to make it a memorable trip for the guests. Guest can be individual or a group and the tourist guide will –

- lead the guests for sightseeing, shopping, etc and be aware of the timings of opening and closing of the monuments,
- knows routes and means of travel to the sites selected,
- provide safety not only to the Guest but also to the host community and tourist site,
- give information about the sites and destinations to the tourists in an entertaining manner, like in the form of stories and legends; and
- at least be bilingual to connect with the guest/ visitor as well as communicate with locals.

According to World Federation of Tourist Guide Association (WFTGA), "Tourist Guide is a person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area which person normally possesses an area – specific qualification usually issued and / or recognised by the appropriate authority" (En 13809 of the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) Adopted by WFTGA at its Dunblane, Scotland Convention 2003). Such specifications are usually issued and/or recognized by the appropriate authority.

There is also confusion whether it is Tour Guide or Tourists Guide or just Guide. In India, for instance, we usually refer to them as Guide or at times Tour Guide. Tourist Guide would be the appropriate way to address them since Guide can be a leader or motivator helping someone to form an opinion or make a decision and tour guide is correct only if the guide is with the tour group for the entire length of tour package. A tourist guide on the other hand is for a limited period of time and at times restricted to a particular site or destination.

16.2.2 Who is a Tour Escort?

Tour escort, at times also referred to as tour leader is a professional who specializes in meet & greet clients and escort them in the destination, assisting guests, regulate and manage the timing of the group, ensure the presence and involvement of the participants, verify and confirm facilities and services, provide and explain the travel program, maintain group harmony, manage any excursions, buy tickets for museums or means of transport, manage reservations with restaurants and accommodation facilities; and generally resolve any problems that may arise during the trip. Since a tour escort / tour leader is not a guide therefore does not provide specific explanations and information, but can provide general information of any kind.

A Tour Escort is someone who escorts visitors at a public place such as a museum or an art gallery, or at sightseeing and recreational tours. They are typically responsible for accompanying the visitors

According to World Federation of Tourist Guide Association(WFTGA), “a person who manages an itinerary on behalf of the tour operator ensuring the programme is carried out as described in the tour operator’s literature and sold to the traveller/ consumer and who gives local practical information is known as Tour Manager/ Tour Director / Tour Escort”.

16.2.3 Difference between Tourist Guide and Tour Escort

Tourist Guide and Tour Escort are two terms often used in the similar vein. Yet there exists a subtle difference in the job description of both, as well as recognition by appropriate authority.

When we use the word Escort, it means that they are following behind you, or watching over/ protecting you. While guide means you’re following them and they are leading you. Mancini (2003) says that ‘Tourist Guide is someone who takes people on sight-seeing excursions of limited duration’. Tour Escort on the other hand ‘is a person who manages a group’s movements over a multi-day tour’.

Tour guide is a qualified person, at times with specialisation in a particular area such as art, history, natural attraction and so on, who accompanies people visiting works of art, museums, monuments, natural attractions and others giving historical, cultural and related information to the tourists. Tour escort, on the other hand, is a qualified person who accompanies people travelling through different destinations within and outside the country to ensure the regular operation of the planned trips by providing necessary support services for its entire duration as well as giving significant information of the site.

From the above following can primarily be said about the difference between Tour Guide and Escorts: -

- A Tourist Guide is a licensed professional; whereas, a Tour Escort may or may not be a licensed professional. The licensing authority for Tourist Guides in India is the Ministry of Tourism, who issues regional guide licenses.
- A Tour Escort is the person who accompanies the Tourist / tour group all through the Tour whereas, a guide is someone who may or may not

accompany the Tour Group / tourist throughout the tour depending upon his speciality.

- A Tour guide can be a tour Escort, if required, but a Tour Escort cannot be a guide, without a license.

16.2.4 Importance of Tourist Guide and Tour Escort

Tour Escorts and Tourist guiding are very critical component of the tourism value chain and play an essential role in ensuring repeat tourist visitation. Tour Escorts and Tourist Guides act as ambassadors of the destination/ region/ country since they are the first to meet and welcome tourists and they are often the last ones to bid farewell to them when they leave the country. In between during the travel, tourists are in regular touch with the Tour Escort and Tourist Guide and go back home with an impression about destination based on their interactions with the Tour Escort and Tourist Guide. Depending on the interaction and services received from the Tour Escort and Tourist Guide, the guests will return home as a satisfied or dissatisfied customer.

Most of the people in a tour use the services of a Guide to learn more about the place they are visiting in terms of history, geography, architecture and culture. Therefore it is important that the information provided by the guide is authentic and creates no discomfort to the guest. The tourist should leave the destination with a positive and accurate image of the destination.

16.3 TYPES OF GUIDE

There is the generic definition of “tour guide” which was established in the section above. Tourist guides are **certified and licensed**; and assist the guests/ visitors in seeing the place in an excellent, unique way. Tourist Guides can be classified based on four different criteria. Let us study the many kinds of tourist guides available:

16.3.1 Classification based on Licensing Authority

As you are aware, the major difference between a Tourist Guide and Tour Escort is that a Tourist Guide is a licensed Professional while Tour Escort may or may not be licensed. In India we find three licensing authority for Tourist guides and we can classify guides based on the licensing authority. They are:

- 1) Site/ Local/ City Guides – Guides are selected and trained by local bodies and given license to operate as local guides. For Example, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has introduced a new guide policy that will be implemented in all of its monuments across the country. According to this new policy, ASI will select individuals based on their merit and grant them a guide licence, and they will then need to undergo a six-week training programme provided by ASI. These licensed guides will be able to operate only in the monuments of ASI.
- 2) State Level Guides – The State Tourism Development Corporation of all the states of India, conduct a process of selection of Tourist guides who are then trained and given license to operate as a Tourist Guide only within the border of that one state. For Example, Odisha Tourism Development Corporation will give the license for operations only within Odisha.

- 3) Regional Level Guides – Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India selects Regional Level Tourist Guides who can operate beyond one state. According to MoT, the five jurisdiction or area of operation of the Regional Level Guides would be as under:
- i) **Northern Region:** States of Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Union Territory of Chandigarh.
 - ii) **Southern Region:** States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Union Territories of Pondicherry & Lakshadweep.
 - iii) **Western & Central Regions:** States of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa and Union Territories of Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu.
 - iv) **Eastern Region:** States of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
 - v) **North-Eastern Region:** States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim & Tripura.

The jurisdiction of each region mentioned above would comprise the States / Union Territories, which are covered by the respective Regional Office of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (Source: Ministry of Tourism, GOI)

16.3.2 Classification based on Employment terms

Tourist Guides can be classified based on the employment contract that they have or the way they pick up guiding jobs. They can be:

- 1) **Freelance Guide** – Guides are not attached with any particular tour and travel company or hotel or any other organisation. They are freelancers and can work with any tour company or provide their services to the tourist on site. They can also be in a contract with few companies and pick and choose assignment as per their choice.
- 2) **Staff / Tour Company Guide** – Tourist Guides on the payroll of only one Tour company and are salaried Tourist Guides.
- 3) **Volunteer Guide** – Volunteer Guides, also known as docent. They are the guide who are working free of charge or volunteering on a site. Docent specifically works at a museum. An example will be the Volunteer guides at National Museum, New Delhi

16.3.3 Classification based on Time Commitment

Tourist Guides can also be classified based on the time that they give to the vocation.

- 1) **Full Time Guides** – Tourist Guides who work as Tourist Guides all through the year are the full time Tourist Guides.
- 2) **Seasonal** – the season for inbound tourists in India from October to March. There are some Tourist guides who work only with foreign inbound tourists during the inbound season as tourist guides and not during other months of the year.

16.3.4 Classification based on Place of Guiding (Specialisation)

- 1) Heritage/ Cultural – A cultural or heritage guide is someone employed on a paid or voluntary basis who conducts paying or non – paying tourists around an area or site of historical, cultural and heritage importance utilizing guiding and interpretation principles.
- 2) Nature Guides - Nature tour guides lead groups to natural attractions, national parks, and other outdoor locations where wildlife and scenic locations are the focus of the tour. These guides are experts in the natural sciences and have the ability to engage visitors with their knowledge of biology, geology, and the history of the location.
- 3) Eco – Tourism – The Guides who communicates and interprets the significance of the environment, promotes minimal impact practices, ensures the sustainability of the natural and cultural environment, and motivates tourists to consider their own lives in relation to larger ecological or cultural concerns are known as Eco – Tour Guides (Source: Quality Assurance and Certification in Eco Tourism)
- 4) Museum - A Museum Guide is someone who accompanies visitors on a visit to a museum, providing them with information about the various objects in the museum’s collection; and also be responsible for making sure that the visitors do not violate the museum regulations.
- 5) On – site – A guide who takes tourists on a tour of a particular site only and are available only at that particular site are known as an on-site guide. On-site guide conducts the tour of a specific building or a limited area.
- 6) City Guides - A tourist can take a tour of the city by motor coach, van, taxi or hop-on, hop-off bus, or as part of a walking tour and the guide who points out and comments on the highlights of the city is called a city guide.
- 7) Specialised Guides - Specialised guide has particular skill sets that are highly unique to match the demands of a tourist. These guides may conduct bike tours, white water rafting trips, hiking expeditions or tours that are more physically demanding and unusual. At times they are also known as Adventure Tour guides, depending upon the specialization.
- 8) Step-on Guides - This kind of guide is more commonly seen in United States of America and are usually free-lanced guides. They are considered specialists who meet a touring group, ‘steps on’ the coach or van to give informed overviews of the area being toured; and then steps off as the tour continues to other areas.
- 9) Personal / Private Guide: Personal or private guide are also a type of city guide and at times they are driver and guide at the same time. These guides have their own vehicles and since the area to cover is small, being a driver cum guide is economical. For example - an island-tour
- 10) Cruise ship Tour Guides - Guides that work for cruise ships can be classified as cruise ship tour guides or shore excursion guides. These guides take group of tourists for the shore excursion and are employed permanently with the Cruise Ship Operators.

Depending upon role and requirement, the types of Guide can be many others. Nevertheless, the role and responsibilities of all of them are similar. It is discussed in the next section.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What is the difference between a Guide and an Escort?

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- 2) What are the types of guide based on licensing authority?

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- 3) Discuss the importance of a guide.

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16.4 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GUIDE

A tourist guide, a licensed professional, generally accompany tourists to different types of tourist attractions like archaeological sites, museums, churches, monuments, and offers all the information and explanations of interest to the tourists. It is important to establish the role of a guide and all of the accompanying responsibilities, since role of tour guides are far more complex than most people think. Let's start by discussing the Work Ethics of Guiding.

16.4.1 Ethics of Guiding

Ethics, Values, Morals and Principles are some terms that we use often in our life and at times interchangeably. Values describe what is important in a person's life. Principles inform our choice of desirable behavioural constraints (morals, ethics, rules, laws, etc.). Ethics and morals prescribe what is or is not considered appropriate behaviour in living one's life. Ethics refer to the series of rules provided to an individual by an external source, e.g. their profession. On the other hand, Morals refer to an individual's own principles regarding right and wrong.

Ethical behaviours therefore refer to the set of values governing proper behaviour in the workplace. Work ethic means that employees will be working and acting within the rules of acceptable professional ways of doing things and acting within rules of correct moral behaviour. Work ethic includes - respect for your employer/ where you work, commitment, punctuality, diligence, sincerity, loyalty; and pride in own work. Business ethics adds on to work ethics and says that one understands what is right from wrong; does the right thing to do in any situation when at work; tries to make things better; and respect others and their property.

Ethics in professional life is very important, and that's what differentiates a successful guide from an unsuccessful Guide. It is the responsibility of the Tourist Guide to follow these work ethics. The Ethics in tour guiding applies primarily to three areas of the job:

- **Content of tour guiding** - Whenever information is being provided to the tourists, a Guide should :
 - be truthful and honest about the information,
 - never ever make up information; and
 - provide all the products and services (eg. take tourists to all the site of a destination) that were advertised and promised in the tour itinerary
- **Behaviour during and after guiding** – A guide needs to behave in a manner that reflects his work ethics. A guide should -
 - deliver tour guide services in a way which is sensitive to local social, economic and environmental issues – meeting the principles of Responsible Tourism,
 - never ask tourists to go on tours without going through your employer or ask for tips,
 - do not buy or sell (illegal) items or make a profit from tourists,
 - always be loyal to the tour company that employs you for the tour,
 - declare your income for tax purposes, and
 - not pay bribes or charge tourists for special services outside of the itinerary.
- **Management of tours and activities** – Professional ethics are reflected in the way tour is planned, organised and managed. A guide should -
 - not change itinerary to visit places/ shops for special commissions, if it changes the quality and value of the tour.
 - avoid missing out any activity and stops at sites.

16.4.2 Role of a Tourist Guide

A tour guide is someone the group of tourist follow from site to site. The primary role of a tour guide is to be -

- 1) Leader – the guide must be a leader who can move group of tourist and someone the tourists will gladly follow from site to site.
- 2) Educator – being knowledgeable about the region, locality and site is very important. The information imparted should be correct and shared in a manner that does not offend anyone, either the guests or the hosts.
- 3) Host – the guide is the host for the tourists and should behave accordingly. The guide should not forget to share information about local tradition and culture and behave with the politeness of a host.
- 4) Interpreter – like an interpreter, guide should interpret local traditions and culture for the tourists. He must also be the interpreter between the host community and the guests since they might have a language barrier.
- 5) Public relation representative – Guide is the public face of not only the tour company but also of the country or destination a tourist group is visiting.

16.4.3 Responsibilities of a Tourist Guide

The role and responsibilities of a guide is to organise, inform and entertain tourists. Guides are mainly freelance, self-employed, and often seasonal and may be at times working during unsociable hours. The responsibilities of a tour guide are many while being ethical is one of them. Few responsibilities of tour guide are

- Tour-guides need to be familiar with the places where people come, as this affects the ways people behave. The cultural differences and the expectations and level of service may vary depending on the country of origin.
- Communicate with the group/s or their representative/s about the details of the tour – assembly time and place, destination, accommodation, transportation, immigration concerns (if the tour is set abroad) and costs
- Greet visitors as soon as they get on board the bus, and show people to their seats if necessary
- Distribute materials to the group at the beginning of the tour, which includes audio headsets and brochures
- Describe points of interest around the city to the group and answer any questions, which requires learning a comprehensive history of each check point
- Buy tickets and or make arrangements for the smooth entry of tourists at each site/ place visited during the tour,
- Provide directions to visitors who would like to check out a specific area at a later date,
- Monitor the behaviour of the group, especially when young children are in it, and ensure everyone remains in compliance with the rules
- Maintain a positive, friendly demeanour at all times and try making jokes and providing insightful commentary at the same time
- Always make sure of the safety and convenience of the tour group; and
- Make sure all the members of the tour group follow the schedules and return safely either to the hotel or place of origin.

16.4.4 Qualities of an Effective Tourist Guide

Tourists travel all over the world and are at a position to compare the skills, knowledge, behaviour and professionalism of tour guides from one destination/ country to another. Tour Guides therefore have to show high standards of professionalism all the time in order to be respected by international tourists. A tour guide has a lot of competencies (skills, knowledge and way of behaving) that make up their professional profile:

- 1) Punctual – Punctuality shows that one respects the other person enough to respect their time. Tourists, specially international tourists are very careful about time and as a tour guide one should be the first to arrive at every meet.

- 2) Good communication skills – Having good verbal communication, good presentation, public speaking as well as having multiple language skills constitutes good communication skills of a guide.
- 3) Pleasing personality - Self Confident, Friendly, Eloquent/Articulate personality will be perfect for a guide as she/ he need to hold the attention of tourists, and group members.
- 4) Polite and Respectful – It is important that guide is aware of cultural differences between tourist and his/her own country of origin and be respectful. Further, people with disability must be handled with respect and politeness, and also compassion but never pity or apathy.
- 5) Enthusiastic and friendly - Guide must be enthusiastic about the tour programme and be proactive while interacting with the tourists. This will ensure that the tourists participate in the tour and have a great experience.
- 6) Tactful and patient – Guide needs to be patient and tactful as at times tourists can ask some questions that might go against the value system of the guide but the guide must be flexible and prepared to tackle unpleasant situations.
- 7) Open to questions and assertive – Guides must be accommodating and open-minded enough for the tourists to ask questions. At the same time, they should be assertive enough to avoid and lead the group away from unpleasant questions and situations.
- 8) Honest and trustworthy - The guide must be honest and trustworthy enough for the guests to feel comfortable with him / her and accept the knowledge shared.
- 9) Resourcefulness with good memory – Guide must be resourceful enough to collect unusual information for the tour destinations and sites to make the trip unique. Being able to retain historical facts (fond of History) as well as cultural aspects of the destinations is very important.
- 10) Sense of humour – sense of humour can build many bridges and make us many friends among strangers. An Outgoing personality with a good sense of humour is very important for guides who meet strangers regularly as a part of her/ his job.
- 11) Good Health – Tour guiding generally means man hours of standing as well as walks on a daily basis. It is therefore important that a guide must bear good health and physical fitness to meet the demands of the job
- 12) Time Management - Every experienced guide knows that they have their fixed times on a tour, and that they must maintain a constant eye on the clock and readjust their mental plan on a continuing basis. This relationship and constant readjustment between time, distances, and guest experience is an integral part of guiding, and must become second nature to a guide's thinking. Unexpected delays or opportunities often arise, and with every delay or addition of a stop or activity, the time/distance/experience matrix must be readjusted.

16.4.5 Techniques for a Good Tour Guiding Experience

Tour Guiding is a skill which can be learned and acquired through proper training. A few techniques are mentioned below that helps in creating a memorable experience for both the tourists and the guide.

- 1) **Self Presentation** – First impression is created on the group in the first meeting itself and its mostly non – verbal communication. Smile, Confidence, Authority, Personal Dress and Hygiene plays a major role on creating the first impression and subsequent bonding with the tourists. Greeting the tour group leader, members and driver is a must for creating the first impression and connect.
- 2) **Physical Aspects of Guiding** - Eye Contact is very important while guiding. For example while explaining about a monument remember to face the group and not the monument. Body Position of the guide should be such that he / she is audible to all the members and the Group Position is surrounding the guide.
- 3) **Content of the presentation** - Make sure that you have collected information that is easily understandable to the group members. Start with a story, be personal and add anecdotes along with historical and cultural facts to make it all relevant. Try to avoid the use of statistics or too many jargons unless it is easily comprehensible. Most importantly, finish on time and do not make it long drawn.
- 4) **Voice Projection** – The Pace and Tone of Delivery of the content is as important as the content itself. Pronunciation and voice projection helps in communicating the information properly.

16.5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TOUR ESCORT

Tour escorts accompany groups of people / tour group on organized trips, mostly package tours. Tour escorts usually work for tour companies, which are as varied as their clientele. Some specialize in certain activities—archaeological digs or mountain climbing, for instance. Others specialize in certain markets such as students or retirees, budget tours, religious tours, and so on. Tourists who take escorted tours want the security and convenience of having transportation, accommodations, and sightseeing arranged and managed for them by the Escort. Tour Escorts are also referred to as Tour leaders, since she/he takes the initiative of meeting guests on arrival and makes sure that the needs and demands of the tour group is met. Tour Escorts are the link between the tour companies and are very important for the overall satisfaction of the tourist from the tour.

16.6.1 Responsibilities of a Tour Escort

Role and responsibilities of the tour escort are manifold. Traditionally the role of the Tour Escort is that of a tour leader and is the Public Face of the Tour Company. The responsibilities of Tour Escort are many as discussed below:-

- 1) **Welcoming the Guests** – Tour Escorts meets the group on arrival either at the Airport or Railways station and ensures that the list of tourist matches

- the guests who have arrived. No one should be left behind, including the baggage of the tourist.
- 2) Accommodation arrangement – The check in and check out of the guests at the hotel is to be taken care by the Tour Escort. Check in and checkout of groups is a long drawn procedure and Escorts needs to ensure the comfort of the group during this process.
 - 3) Logistics of the tour - They have to deal with many suppliers along the way and they are responsible to ensure that all the suppliers fulfil their obligations as per the agreements between tour operators and the suppliers. All the promised services must be provided by the suppliers such as hotels, guides, transport, and so on.
 - 4) Itinerary – Escorts must ensure that the tour itinerary is followed and everything mentioned in the tour brochure is arranged and delivered. There is no deviation without any emergency.
 - 5) Safety and security – Safety of the tourists during the trip lies with the Escort since she/ he knows the region, unlike the tourist. One way of ensuring safety is to give each guest a badge with important phone number and address, so that no one is lost. Safety of baggage of the tourist is also the responsibility of the escort.
 - 6) Assisting tourists shop in the town – Tourists enjoying buying souvenirs and shopping in the destination is to be assisted by the escort so that the tourist is not fooled by touts and unscrupulous shop owners.
 - 7) Accessible and approachable – Tour escorts job is to put the tourists at ease during the journey so as to give them a great experience. They are also responsible for the spiritual and material well being of all members of the group so as to ensure that you have a good time.
 - 8) Medical Assistance – It is important for the escort to be aware of any medical condition of the tour group members so that she/ he are ready for any medical emergency that may happen. Escorts must have with them the name and phone number of doctors at each destination the tour group is visiting, to ensure that medical help if needed will be provided to the guests.
 - 9) Complaints– In spite of all support guests may have complaints and it is best to resolve them before the tour is over so that the guests leaves town with pleasant memories and the tour company benefits from word of mouth publicity.
 - 10) Emergencies – Escort must be ready to handle emergency situation like the loss of a passport, theft, death of a group member, medical emergency, situation wherein one group member is left behind and so on. Escorts must always have contingency plans ready with them.
 - 11) Seeing off – Customer experience Management says that the last interaction with service providers and sites is what one retains the most after any tour. Escort needs to see the tour group off at the airport or railways station as it may be. The baggage of the guests must also be counted to ensure that the trip winds up on a good note.

16.6.2 Qualities of a Tour Escorts

Tour Escorts routinely stays with new group of guests for a long period of time. To forge a friendly relationship with new group of people every few days and to ensure that they have an enjoyable stay, takes special effort and quality since tourists want their Tour Escorts to be both a leader and friend. To be a tour escort one:

- needs excellent communication skills and cheerful personality to interact with new group of visitors and put them at ease,
- should have organizational ability, logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions/ conclusions/ approaches to problems.
- must have a great helping attitude and adjusting nature, so as to act in relation to others' actions.
- financial acumen is also important as the expenses during the tour needs to be maintained by the tour escort,
- must have the ability of active listening to understand what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times,
- should be physically fit to ensure that she/ he is able to participate in the physical activities during the tour and also ensure the safety of the guests,
- must be able to respond calmly to such crises as airline strikes and bus breakdowns; and
- must be a good student of Time Management as the tour must follow a time frame and tour escort will be managing not only one's own time but also the time of others.

16.6.3 Escorting a Tour

Tour Escorting involves careful preparation, organising, planning and management. The Tour Escort needs to make plans even before the tour starts. Let us discuss these actions in detail.

1) Preparation –

- Learn about the tour - the route and destinations of the tour,
- Collect information regarding the suppliers who will be used during the tour,
- Find out about the origin of the guests and if they have any special needs; and
- Collect the set of information that needs to be shared with the group members

2) Organising -

- Get checklists related to the travel ready, to ensure that even smallest detail pertaining to travel is not forgotten or missed.
- Tour itinerary along with the vouchers, if any, must be collected from

the tour company

- Welcome speech should be planned which needs to be crisp, informative yet punctuated with humour and few travel tips .

3) Planning -

- Plan tour with interesting events to make it unique. For example - Scholars / Academicians of certain specified area of study like music, art, history can be arranged as speakers for some expert opinion
- Plan in a manner that cultural shock of tourists is taken care of and the events and site visits planned do not offend any of the guests.

4) Management -

- Time management is the most important part of the tour management since everything is time bound
- Ensure ways to handle natural calamities or disasters and be ready with a contingency plan
- Manage any kind of emergency that might occur like – missing group member, missing a connecting flight or train, and so on

Check Your Progress 2

1) What is meant by Ethics of Guiding?

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2) What are the qualities of a guide?

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3) Discuss the responsibilities of an Escort

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16.7 LET US SUM UP

Guiding and Escorting are essential components of tourism industry that adds value to the Tourism experience. Although often spoken and used interchangeably, Tour guide and escort are two different terms with different job description. Primarily Guide is a licensed one while Tour Escort does not need any license. The role and responsibilities of a Guide and Escort are varied and at times overlapping. Most importantly both of them play an important role in leaving an impression on the tourist about the country or place of visit and its people and culture. They are the brand ambassadors and image makers of the tourism industry.

16.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See section 16.2.3 and frame your answer
- 2) See section 16.3.1 and frame your answer
- 3) See section 16.2.4 and frame your answer

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See section 16.4.1 and frame your answer
- 2) See section 16.4.4 and frame your answer
- 3) See section 16.6.1 and frame your answer

