Insurance Council
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Continuing Education Guidelines
Program for Travel Agencies

V.1.2

Insurance Council
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CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES - PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL AGENCIES

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Council Rule 7(5) licensees must meet the requirements of the continuing education program established by Council, as amended from time to time. The Insurance Council of British Columbia ("Insurance Council") introduced its continuing education program for travel agents engaged in the sales of travel insurance in 2005 (as per Council Notices ICN-05-001 – *Travel Agents Engaged in the Sale of Travel Insurance Receive a Limited Conditional Exemption from the Licensing Requirements Under the Financial Institutions Act*).

CONTINUING EDUCATION

What is continuing education?

Continuing education is learning that helps fulfill the knowledge required to maintain a standard of professional competence and remain current with an ever-changing industry. This knowledge can be obtained through a variety of learning opportunities such as online or in-person courses offered by training institutions, attending professional development conferences.

Who needs to complete continuing education?

In accordance with Council Rule 7(5), all licensees are required to complete continuing education courses. As well, licensees are expected to maintain competence as required under Section 5.2 of Insurance Council's Code of Conduct: "*You must conduct all insurance activities in a competent manner. Competent conduct is characterized by the application of knowledge and skill in a manner consistent with the usual practice of the business of insurance in the circumstances. You must continue your education in insurance to remain current in your skills and knowledge.*"

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Continuing Education Record Form ..... **Appendix 1**

COUNCIL'S CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

DEFINITIONS

Licence Period: Annual licence period runs from June 1 to May 31.

Annual Licence Renewal: A process that consists of completing a declaration to confirm that the licensee has met their professional licensing requirements and submitting an annual licence renewal fee.

Continuing Education Records: Documents confirming relevant knowledge was acquired for the purposed of continuing education (i.e. certificates of course completion, attendance records, written confirmation from course providers, etc.)

Calendar Year: January 1 to December 31

Continuing Education Credits: One hour of instruction is equal to one credit, not including breaks.

Resident Licensee: A licensee who is a resident of British Columbia.

Non-Resident Licensee: A licensee who is a resident of a Canadian province other than British Columbia.

Exempt Employee or Salesperson of a Licensed Travel Agency: An individual employed by a licensed travel insurance agency who sells travel insurance incidental to their ordinary business as a travel agent or wholesaler and is exempt from licensing under the *Financial Institutions Act*.

Home Jurisdiction: The Canadian province where a licensee lives and holds an insurance licence.

NON-RESIDENT LICENSEES

All licensees must complete continuing education regardless of their home jurisdiction. Non-resident licensees whose home jurisdiction has a mandatory continuing education requirement will not be required to meet Insurance Council's requirements provided they complete their continuing education in accordance with their home province's requirements and keep their licence in good standing in their home jurisdiction. If the home jurisdiction does not have a continuing education program, the licensee is required to meet Insurance Council's continuing education program requirements.

RESIDENT LICENSEES

Exempt employees and salespersons of restricted licensed travel agencies and sole-proprietor travel agencies must complete a minimum of two hours of continuing education each calendar year.

Course Content

Continuing education is learning that helps fulfill the knowledge required to maintain a standard of professional competence and remain current with an ever-changing industry. Licensees should complete sufficient education to maintain and increase their knowledge in the insurance products they sell. Therefore, accepted continuing education is technical material directly related to travel insurance products.

Continuing education courses that do not contribute to fulfilling knowledge to remain competent in the insurance industry will not be given credit toward meeting Insurance Council's continuing education program. Credit toward their continuing education requirement will not be granted if the course content primarily involves:

- Marketing or sales techniques;
- Service;
- Training on how to use computer programs;
- Self improvement or self help; or
- Non-insurance products.

Continuing Education Records

Insurance Council's continuing education program requires restricted travel agency licensees to keep continuing education records for each exempt employee or salesperson for five (5) years, even if they have left the agency. Records should indicate proof of course attendance or completion issued by the course provider including the exempt employee's or salesperson's full name, the course name and description, the relevant course content (see "Course Content") and the number of eligible continuing education credits granted. An optional form is included in Appendix 1 of this guideline to help licensed travel agencies track their exempt employees' and salespersons' continuing education and keep their records organized. Please note this form does not replace the requirement to maintain continuing education records.

Examples of continuing education records:

- Continuing education certificates provided by the course provider;
- Attendance sheets provided by the course provider; or
- Written correspondence from the course provider confirming that the course was successfully completed.

Reporting Continuing Education

Licensees are required to confirm they understand Insurance Council's continuing education requirements when they complete their annual licence renewal. Licensed travel agencies are not required to provide their exempt employee's or salesperson's continuing education records as part of the agency's annual licence renewal but must be in compliance with the continuing education requirements and keep a detailed record of their exempt employee's and salesperson's completed CE for five (5) years.

Partial credits

Each hour of instruction time is eligible for one continuing education credit. Partial credits will be granted in increments of fifteen (15) minutes for courses less than one (1) hour. For example, fifteen (15) minutes of instruction time amounts to a quarter (.25) of a credit and thirty (30) minutes of instruction time amounts to half (.5) of a credit.

Pro-rated continuing education

Exempt employees or salespersons of licenced travel agencies who start work on or after July 1st in a calendar year will only be required to complete one (1) hour of continuing education in that calendar year.

Carry-over continuing education credits

Exempt employees and salespersons of licensed travel agencies can carry forward up to two (2) continuing education credits to the next calendar year.

Duplicate courses

Exempt employees and salespersons of licenced travel agencies cannot complete the same course for continuing education credit within three years. Exceptions will be made where Insurance Council can confirm the course content has changed substantially enough to warrant retaking the course.

Audits

Although licensed travel agencies are not required to submit evidence of continuing education for their exempt employees and salespersons, Insurance Council conducts random audits. In the event of an audit, licensed travel agencies will be required to provide their employee's or salesperson's complete continuing education records for up to five (5) years, regardless of whether they still work for the agency or how long they were employed by the agency.

Compliance

Insurance Council conducts random audits of licensees' continuing education records. Failure by a licenced travel agency to ensure its exempt employees and salespersons complete continuing education or failure to keep complete records can result in licensed travel agencies being subject to disciplinary action.

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APPENDIX 1
CONTINUING EDUCATION RECORDS

TRAVEL INSURANCE AGENCY LICENCE

For the calendar year ending December 31, 20____

The number of continuing education hours required is **two (2)** per year for each exempt employee selling travel insurance ("exempt employee"). A calendar year starts January 1st and ends December 31st annually.

Please refer to Insurance Council's *Continuing Education Guidelines* on Insurance Council's website for more information.

Complete a separate form for each calendar year.

Agency Licence Number: _____ Agency Name: _____

COURSES COMPLETED

List the continuing education the agency's exempt employees completed between January 1st and December 31st. Use a separate form for each calendar year. If you require additional space, attach a separate page.

Keep this form with attendance certificates, as you may be asked to provide the certificates if you are audited.

DATE	EXEMPT EMPLOYEE or SALESPERSON NAME	COURSE NAME	COURSE PROVIDER	HOURS CREDITED