

**CITY OF CHARLESTON  
TOUR GUIDE PROGRAM  
UPDATE**

DATE: August 13, 2018

RE: The City's Voluntary Certification Pending Judicial Review program.

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For over thirty years the City maintained a tour guide licensing regime to ensure tour guides were qualified to charge the public fees for their services. Tour guide licensing successfully promoted the quality of the paying customer's experience, which is the foundation of the City's reputation as a top destination.

The City continues to believe that a mandatory licensing program for all tour guides charging for their services is the best approach to protect its residents and visitors. While the recent ruling means the City cannot require tour guide licensing at this time, the City is taking action to promote a quality tour guide experience within the bounds of the Judge's ruling. Specifically, the City will maintain its licensing program for all those who take the exam and otherwise comply with the licensing regulations on a voluntary basis pending further judicial review. The City also will be filing a motion to reconsider the Judge's ruling shortly and will consider an appeal to the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, if needed.

The City's Voluntary Certification Pending Judicial Review program will continue to offer the tour guide exam and continuing education courses as currently administered. Tour guides who currently hold a tour guide license will be considered certified guides under the program. Tour guides can remain certified by meeting the same continuing education and testing requirements as existed under the former licensing regulations. Any individual who does not currently hold a license and seeks to become a certified tour guide must pass the City's tour guide exam in order to receive voluntary certification. The City will provide proof of certification. The City will be ready to reinstitute its mandatory licensing regulations if further judicial review allows it to do so.

All tour guides are required to obtain annual business licenses unless working under a company that has a business license. Tour guides are required to pay tour fees and otherwise comply with the tour guide ordinance.

Rules regarding hours of tours, geographic restrictions on tours, or animal welfare provisions have not been challenged, must be followed, and will continue to be enforced by the City.