

Operator Guidelines – Section 2 – Star Rating Classification
Pre-Arrival

<p>Section 2 – Pre Arrival</p> <p>Online</p>	
2.1	A website or website presence.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This may be a website maintained directly by the business, or a distinct and individual page on, for example, a local or national association website, group or consortium site, a business Facebook page or similar.</i> • <i>Information on the business is required over and above a simple listing. Booking facility is not necessary but contact details (phone number) or email address are required.</i>
2.2	Website provides information in languages appropriate to the business's main markets.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>At least one foreign language must be provided for to meet this requirement. This may be a small amount of basic text on essential information (e.g. directions, welcome, information on the property/accommodation type e.g. self-catering, camping, etc., any restrictions) on a page or within a page, or a translation facility (typically clicking on a relevant national flag button, easy and simple to install).</i>
2.3	Website information to be kept up to date.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are photos and text recent/relevant/appropriate?</i> • <i>Are arrival and departure times accurate or have they recently changed?</i> • <i>Local activity, festivals and events (up to date) included.</i>
2.4	Guest able to book with or without prior notice or be clearly informed of options as appropriate for the services provided.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Booking available in advance by phone, email or direct booking facility on own website or via an online travel agency (OTA), association, group or consortium site.</i>
2.5	Accurate description of the property online.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All details correct and up to date. These may be brief or more detailed. It is for the owner to decide upon the detail provided (details may be provided in other ways, e.g. in other marketing channels). Whatever information is provided, however, should be accurate.</i> • <i>If descriptions of the services and facilities provided are accompanied by supporting materials e.g. images, maps, etc., are these accurate and up to date?</i>

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2.6	Accurate information on prices displayed online
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Standard rates correct and up to date, e.g. room rate or per person?</i> • <i>Extra charges explained e.g. breakfast, Wi-Fi, electricity/energy/fuel.</i>
2.7	Accurate information on services displayed online.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Availability of additional services, e.g. transport, cleaning in self-catering, energy/electricity, laundry, or activities accurately explained.</i> • <i>Include relevant costs as appropriate.</i>
2.8	Ability to request any special requirements online.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Offering to try and attempt to satisfy individual requests can be attractive to guests and show that the operator is willing to respond to individual, unplanned for, requests.</i> • <i>This may not always be possible to deliver, but a willingness to do so will be appreciated.</i> • <i>Providing specific services, such as planning or providing materials for a party, group, celebration etc.</i>
2.9	Information on any known restrictions displayed on website.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear information is provided e.g. no pets, quiet times in the evening on camping parks, no stag or hen parties. Restrictions are usually reasonable and based on business owners' understanding of their main markets' expectations.</i> • <i>Guests should know what to expect before and when they book. They should not be surprised by a restriction upon arrival or during their stay.</i>
2.10	Information on terms and conditions displayed on website.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Legal terms and conditions of booking/contract available on website or via link or similar, or upon request.</i> • <i>T&Cs must be provided on the website, even if via a link.</i>
2.11	Accurate directions to the business displayed on website.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Directions may be provided in text and/or with a map.</i> • <i>A link to e.g. Google Maps, with location and coordinates and/or postcode for satnav/GPS devices.</i>

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2.12	Contact telephone number provided on the website.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Landline and/or mobile with international dialling code evident.</i> • <i>These may be answered during operator's normal business hours.</i>
2.13	Credit/debit card/online payment facilities or other payment methods available on website.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>One or more credit or debit card brands accepted – consideration for market preferences (e.g. China specific brands).</i> • <i>Additional charges may be applied within this requirement.</i> • <i>Guests are usually reassured by being asked to provide a deposit or prepayment. They know that their reservation will be secure, wherever possible.</i>
2.14	Online facility for guest feedback.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This may be a specific 'comment/feedback' facility on the business website or online travel agency (OTA) site etc. A TripAdvisor link on the business's website would be an example. Reviews must be credible.</i>
2.15	Guest feedback actively sought online.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Guests are actively encouraged to provide feedback. For example, on their website..... 'We value your comments on our hospitality and this will help us ...etc.' Feedback must be credible.</i>
Telephone	
2.16	Telephone response - defined or clear process in place.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is may be a defined understanding amongst owners and staff of when and how calls should be answered, and calls/messages responded to including a specific timescale (Many bookings are made online. However, many guests still wish to speak with businesses before they make a booking).</i> • <i>Are calls answered within a set time period?</i>
2.17	The name of the business provided over the phone.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>Are all calls answered with the official name of the business being included in the initial greeting? (guests will be using the official name as per the website and not a local variant e.g. Mary's Place as opposed to Seaview House)</i></p>

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2.18	Staff name provided over the phone.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>The owner, manager or representative answering the call provides their full or first name, unprompted, at some point in the conversation e.g. This is... caravan park, I'm John...', or '...OK, that's all clear, yes we have vacancies, my name is John, by the way...'. It does not need to be formulaic and can be natural.</i></p>
2.19	Offer of directions, and explanation of parking arrangements over the phone if appropriate.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Very few accommodation businesses ask if guests know how to find the property or offer parking information. Easy to offer and always appreciated. Email maps of the location and routes to it.</i> • <i>All staff should be familiar with directions to the property.</i> • <i>Ensure directions provided take account of all approaches to the property.</i>
2.20	Information on any restrictions including arrival/access/departure times offered without request over the phone.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>These should be explained in a positive manner as useful information to ensure the guest is happy with the requirements.</i> • <i>Outline any restrictions that may apply to that rate/booking such as cancellations</i> • <i>Demonstrate that you have good knowledge of what you offer and ensure that you quote the correct rate and explain what it includes.</i>
2.21	Information on terms and conditions provided over the phone.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This may be information on, for example, cancellation policy.</i> • <i>Do staff clarify rates and any additional charges/fees etc.</i>
2.22	Credit/debit card or online payment facilities provided.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>Any charge for this should be explained. If they wish to proceed, take the booking in an efficient manner and explain the method of confirmation required to them.</i></p>
2.23	Confirmation of caller requirements over the phone.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An example of an enquiry call would be asking about availability of accommodation in a month's time, or next year if the business is about to close for the winter. It should be emphasised that this is just an enquiry and not a provisional booking 'I'll need to check with my partner before I can confirm anything'. If a small business with limited accommodation it is advisable to make a quick call back later to say that plans have changed, and a booking will not be made.</i> • <i>Did the staff ascertain if the caller required any transport arrangements?</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Did the staff clarify if the guest had any personal preferences (e.g. bed/accommodation type preference)?</i> • <i>A brief summary of the conversation to ensure all information for all requirements are understood, including days and dates booked and the agreed rate.</i> • <i>Was service anticipatory/intuitive and where required adapted/adjusted to meet the caller's needs (i.e. caller should not have to request service at any point)?</i>
2.24	Time of guest arrival requested over the phone, as appropriate for business.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Did the staff ascertain the expected time of arrival and advise the check in time (in the case where the guest was an early arrival)?</i> • <i>This ensures that the guest is not too early, or that a late arriving guest is not assumed to be a no-show.</i>
2.25	Confirmation that information provided over the phone is sufficient and satisfactory.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This ends the call in a polite manner and on a positive note.</i> • <i>Where the main facilities explained, and did you offer the caller directions to find your property, or offer other assistance as required?</i> • <i>Did the staff offer any assistance with other bookings (e.g. offer to make a dinner or activity reservation where appropriate)?</i> <p><i>Did the staff offer any further assistance?</i></p>
2.26	Some form of written (usually email and/or text) confirmation offered or provided.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This will be welcomed by most guests as it provides reassurance and avoids any confusion for both parties.</i> • <i>Did the owner or staff offer to send a confirmation and was it received within two hours of the call (i.e. if call was made during the business hours) or first thing the following business day, with the property logo and property contact details present and was all information within the confirmation correct?</i>
2.27	Booking handled in a professional manner that makes the guest feel welcome and gives confidence that details have been accurately recorded.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For assessment purpose, 'booking' refers to an enquiry call.</i> • <i>Was the attitude of the staff member friendly and warm?</i> • <i>Is the guest provided with confidence that their requirements have been understood?</i> • <i>Were their requested details checked?</i> <p><i>(Note: covered in other criteria in this section)</i></p>

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2.28	Staff speech clear and easy to understand over the phone.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Was speech clear, well-paced, jargon/slang free and use of English adequate to be fully understood?</i>• <i>For example, did the staff engage in a natural (non-scripted), friendly and interested manner?</i>• <i>Did staff personalise the interaction in any way (i.e. engage in polite conversation) and engage the caller as an individual?</i>
2.29	Staff ended the call with a sincere farewell and thanks for calling.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Did staff personalise the interaction in any way (i.e. engage in polite conversation) and engage the caller as an individual? This ends the call on a friendly note leaving the caller with a positive impression.</i>
2.30	Staff are patient and understanding, allowing sufficient time for the caller to explain their requirements and understand all details provided.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Guests are allowed time to talk and ask questions, even if not directly relevant to the enquiry or booking. This is the start of building a relationship. There should be no sense of hurrying the caller.</i>