

October – December 2018

INTRODUCING THE 2019 CONSUMER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

*Just in time for the holidays, our new **Consumer Awareness Campaign** has launched! TICO spent the summer working closely with our recently hired marketing agency, to develop a fresh, new campaign that is entirely digital-based. The goal driving the process was to engage consumers and provide information about the benefits of booking with a TICO-registered travel agency or website.*



TICO's campaign focuses on the digital space since the internet is a high-traffic area for researching travel destinations and finding information. More and more consumers are booking online, or simply perusing the online deals and then contacting their trusted travel agency.

Now showing on YouTube, the campaign features three videos that appeal to the three demographics. The star of the campaign is the

Asterisk. To view the video, [click here](#). The other two videos can be seen [here](#) and [here](#). To complement the videos, banner ads on various websites will target specific demographics, based on their travel behaviours.

The intent is to make sure that all travellers understand that they must book with a TICO-registered travel agency or website in order to benefit from Ontario's consumer protection laws should something affect their travel plans.

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MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR

As the year winds down and we enjoy a break for the holiday season, I'd like to share with you where our focus has been since our last update.

We had a busy year with new developments on various fronts. TICO entered 21 years of consumer protection, and with this milestone we are mindful of the continued changes in the business environment. With technology as a driver, more and more consumers are moving over to digital methods of communication, commerce and entertainment, and we evolved our approach accordingly.

Following an extensive competitive process, we hired a new marketing firm and spent the better part of this year developing a new, fresh Consumer Awareness Campaign that is entirely digital. By now, you may have already come across our videos or banners on the internet or through social media. The campaign, called Asterisk, is a bold new way of getting consumers' attention so they understand the value of TICO and booking with a TICO-registered travel agency, website or tour operator. This new campaign is targeted at several key segments of Ontario consumers to ensure that we appeal to the majority of travellers.

As you know, a new government was elected in June. As with any new government, it takes time to establish new relationships and understand direction and their new mandate. The TICO Board and senior management have been hard at work in meeting with the Ministry team. Recently, Premier Ford shuffled his cabinet and a new Minister was assigned responsibility for consumer protection in Ontario (amongst a very large portfolio). We were fortunate, and among the first, to meet with the Honourable B. Walker during his first week in his new role. At this meeting, a few members of TICO's Board and senior management emphasized the importance of the regulatory changes underway and stressed the importance of other modernization initiatives, including the industry-financed Compensation Fund. The meeting was positive and constructive.

In late summer, we experienced the unfortunate failure of Sinorama Holidays which kept our staff busy with consumer inquiries and claims against the Travel Industry Compensation Fund. We never want to see the failure of a travel agency, but when it happens, we're here to make sure that consumers are compensated for travel services that they did not receive.

Sinorama operated in three regulated provinces, including Ontario. The company is headquartered in Montreal and recently declared



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A New Direction for TICO's Education Standards Program

Effective January 2, 2019, TICO will commence an exciting new partnership with education provider Oliver Publishing Inc. (OPI). A recognized leader in regulated e-learning for the financial industry and a leading education innovator in the FinTech industry, OPI continually raises the bar by giving students the opportunity to grow professionally through continuing education, licensing and e-learning solutions.

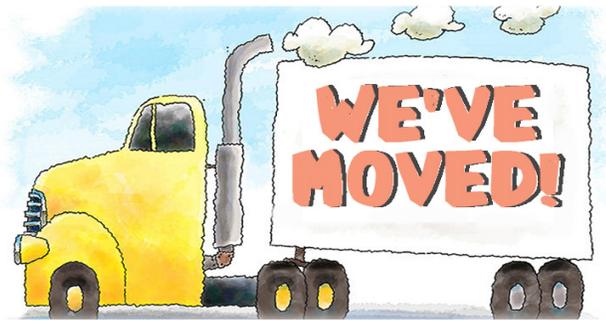
Heralding the move to a new provider, some program enhancements will be introduced initially, with more upgrades to follow.

What is changing?

- Starting in January, students will register for the exam directly with OPI. The link will be announced in the New Year.
- Students will no longer have to arrange for proctors for their exams, saving both time and money. Exams will be remotely proctored via webcam. The computer requirements for the exam with the new provider can be viewed on TICO's website. Please [click here](#).
- Students will no longer have to wait 14 days to book and write their exams. First exams can be written immediately following payment of the registration fee.
- Students will have up to six months after paying the exam registration fee to take the exam.
- Exam results will be provided by email within three business days of writing the exam unless there is an irregularity noted during the compliance review.
- Students will receive their exam certificates electronically.
- There will no longer be a Combination Exam but students who wish to take both the Travel Counsellor and Supervisor/Manager Exams can still purchase the exams as a bundle for the same discounted price as the current Combination Exam. If the student passes the Travel Counsellor Exam, he or she can continue and write the Supervisor/Manager Exam, or the individual can write the Supervisor/Manager Exam on another day.

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TICO
on the Move!



Changes are afoot at TICO!

On December 1, 2018, we moved to:

**55 Standish Court, Suite 460
Mississauga, ON L5R 4B2**

All contact information remains the same:

Tel: (905) 624-6241

1-888-451-8426

Fax: (905) 624-8631

Email: tico@tico.ca

Heartening Results

TICO recently conducted a second survey of registrants' experience with TICO's Registration Department (the first survey took place early in 2018). Once again, TICO's Registration Department received a score of 8 and higher, on a scale of 1 to 10, for service in the following areas:

Helpful, courteous, knowledgeable and timely: 100% of respondents

Questions answered to their satisfaction: 94% of respondents

Ease of understanding and completing registration application and renewals: 89% of respondents

Helpful information on the website: 83% of respondents.

Year-round Registrant Engagement

Continuing its efforts to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement and sharing of information with registrants, TICO reached out in the following ways during 2017/2018:

- Conducted 12 financial compliance webinars for industry stakeholders;
- Held nine informative and interactive Travel Agent Workshops for TICO-certified travel agents on key areas of the Regulation such as advertising, disclosure at the time of booking, and the use of social media;
- Created five webinars to support the workshops that focused on individual areas of compliance, and one webinar that focused on the various tools and resources available to assist registrants on TICO's website.

Check the Learning Centre section of the TICO website [click here:](#) for free upcoming webinars available to you.



TICO's Corporate Social Responsibility at Work The Season of Giving... Year-Round!

Once again, TICO's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Committee has had a busy, yet very satisfactory, year in support of a variety of initiatives. On the local front, in addition to its commitment to regularly clean up Mississauga's Max Ward Park, TICO organizes two food drives annually for the Mississauga Food Bank, at Thanksgiving and Christmas. This past Thanksgiving, a grand total of 235lb of food was collected, along with a large box of freshly picked apples. The Mississauga Food Bank is an invaluable lifeline in the community, providing a balanced diet to food bank users that amounts to more than 217,000 nutritional meals monthly, distributed through 50 food banks, breakfast clubs and several hot meal programs.



Moving from local to global, TICO continues, through Plan Canada, to support a community in Nga, Laos. Recently TICO presented a cheque for \$5,100 to Plan Canada, totalling \$10,250 of donation over the past two years.

The money was raised through a wide range of CSR initiatives, including:

- organizing a Tuck Shop, with the profits going to Plan Canada;
- holding a Bake, Book and Basket Sale in the office building's main lobby;
- conducting a silent auction of various items donated by staff;
- two Cook-Off competitions to judge the best chili and the best spaghetti sauce;
- staff signing up to donate on a monthly basis;
- Sueback days, when Susan Janko prepares lattes and cappuccinos the old-fashioned way (no espresso machine involved!); and
- Jean Fridays, when staff pay \$2 to wear jeans to the office.

Plan Canada supports Nga through a three-pronged holistic approach, investing mainly in education, but also in livelihoods (job training, internships and skill building), and in health and nutrition. ▲

Court Matters

CHARGES

Derrell Caprietta has been charged with one count of operating as a travel agent without being registered, contrary to **Section 4 (1) (a)** of the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*. Mr. Caprietta operated in Toronto.

Yasmin Alam has been charged with one count of operating as a travel agent without being registered, contrary to **Section 4 (1) (a)** of the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*. Ms. Alam operated in Toronto.

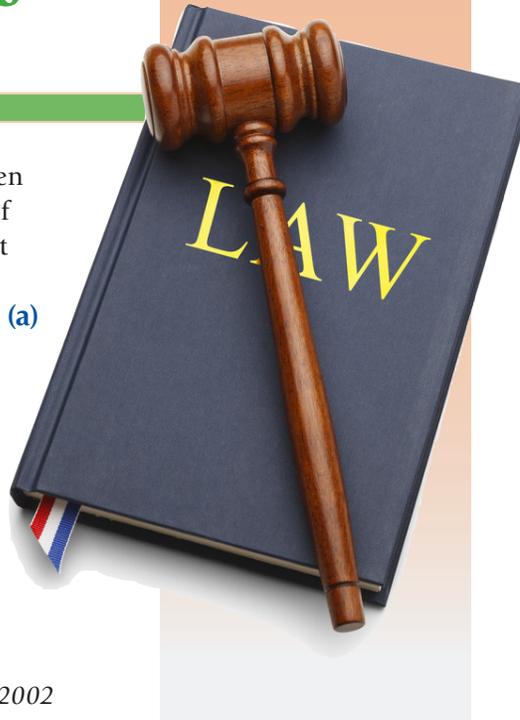
Yves Gildas Emolo Morrison has been charged with one count of operating as a travel agent without registration, contrary to **Section 4 (1) (a)** of the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*. Mr. Morrison operated in Toronto.

CONVICTIONS

Alicia Kielek pleaded guilty to two counts of operating as a travel agent without registration, contrary to **Section 4 (1) (a)** and **Section 31 (1) (c)** of the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*. Sentencing will take place on January 24, 2019.

This is Ms. Kielek's second offence, after she pleaded guilty in 2016 to five counts of operating without registration. She is currently on a probation order with respect to the first offences that requires her to pay \$13,904.96 in restitution by January 17, 2020 and perform 200 hours of community service.

Akkiratourz Ltd. was convicted of two accounts of failing to hold customer funds in a designated trust account and one count of failing to deposit customer funds in a designated trust account. Akkiratourz' actions were contrary to **Section 27 (6)** and **Section 27 (3)** of the Ontario Regulation and **Section 31 (1)** of the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*.



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Important Reminder

Registrants are legally required to include their TICO registration number on their website and all other advertisements. At this time of year, there is an additional bonus to including TICO's logo on all of your promotional materials – in print and online. You can reap the benefit of TICO's exciting freshly launched Consumer Awareness Campaign, which is encouraging consumers to look for TICO's logo to ensure that they book their travel with a TICO registered travel retailer or website.

Save the Dates

February 8 – 10, 2019



Toronto Golf and Travel Show
The International Centre
6900 Airport Road, Mississauga

February 22 – 24, 2019

The Outdoor Adventure Show

The Outdoor Adventure Show
The International Centre, Hall 5
6900 Airport Road, Mississauga

March 30 – 31, 2019



Ottawa Travel and Vacation Show

Shaw Centre
55 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa

Message from the Registrar...
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bankruptcy. Related companies in Ontario and British Columbia have also been petitioned into bankruptcy. TICO is actively involved in the Ontario matter and has applied to the Superior Court of Ontario to have an investigation conducted. This case is now active in the Courts and TICO is awaiting further direction. The filing deadline for consumer claims against the Compensation Fund is February 11, 2019.

Our goal continues to be focused on providing maximum compensation to consumers as is permitted by legislation. As the travel regulator for Ontario, we are also accountable to stakeholders to explain what happened to the consumer funds that were collected for travel services. We'll keep you posted on new developments.

Our final initiative for 2018 is to complete our office move. After 21 years in the same office, TICO moved to a new state-of-the-art office, just down the highway from our existing location. This is an exciting time for our employees and we hope you can drop by our new work-home sometime next year. It's also a time of year when we all need to focus our efforts on family and friends and recharge for the new year ahead. On behalf of the TICO staff and the Board of Directors, I want to wish you all the best for the Holidays and the upcoming New Year. See you in 2019!



Richard Smart,
President and CEO

Court Matters... continued from page 5

The court ordered Akkiratourz to pay fines of \$20,000 per count on each of the three counts, for a total fine – including 25 percent surcharges – of \$75,000.

Gukadharsini Packiyathan, a director and officer of Akkiratourz Ltd., pleaded guilty and was convicted of three counts of failing to take reasonable care to prevent Akkiratourz from committing the aforementioned trust accounting offences, contrary to **Section 31 (2)** of the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*.

The court ordered Ms. Packiyathan to be placed on probation for two years, including supervised requirements such as 200 hours of community service and a fine of \$6,500 payable to the Ontario Travel Industry Compensation Fund, paid in full on or before June 26, 2020. Ms. Packiyathan is also prohibited from being a travel agent or travel wholesaler, or an Officer of Director or employee or contractor of a travel agent or travel wholesaler for two years.

 **REVOCATIONS**

Between July 31 and December 11, four companies had their registrations revoked: **CA Tour International**, o/a **CA Tour International**, Scarborough; **Shade Travels Inc.**, Toronto; **Le (Alice Tran**, o/a **Holiday Travel and Tours**, Toronto and **Universal Explorer Inc.**, Brampton.

For further information on Charges and Convictions, [click here](#). ▲



What is staying the same?

- The Study Manual is unchanged so anyone preparing for the exam can keep studying.
- There is no change to the cost of the exams.

The transition period

- Anyone wishing to take a TICO Exam this year will need to complete the exam by December 20, 2018.
- TICO's Exam Registration database will be shut down on December 4, 2018. Anyone registered who wishes to make a change after December 4, 2018 should contact Lori Furlan, TICO's Exam Coordinator, at ticoexam@tico.ca.
- There will be no TICO exams or registrations from December 21, 2018 to January 1, 2019 in order to complete the transition to the new provider.
- Registration for TICO exams with the new provider will open on January 2, 2019. As there is no waiting period prior to a first exam attempt, candidates will also be able to write the exam starting January 2, 2019.

For those already registered to take the exam

- All exams booked up to December 20, 2018 will proceed as scheduled.
- Anyone with an exam booked during the shut down period will be contacted by TICO and arrangements will be made to expedite the exam or reschedule it with the new provider.
- Any individual with an exam booked in early 2019 will be contacted by TICO and advised regarding the steps required to switch to the new provider.

Anyone with questions regarding the changes to TICO's Education Standards Program should contact TICO at ticoexam@tico.ca or call 1-888-451-8426 (TICO). ▲



Searching for the truth

Part of TICO's mandate is to initiate and conduct investigations when it becomes apparent that there may have been a breach of the legislation. During fiscal 2017/2018, TICO opened 10 new investigations and closed eight investigations that resulted in 16 charges laid under the statute. Some of the investigations were carried over from the prior fiscal year. As at March 31, 2018, there were six open investigations.

Successful prosecutions

Investigations conducted during 2017/2018 resulted in 45 convictions. Penalties imposed in relation to the convictions included:

- * \$196,250 in fines
- * \$2,549,138 in restitution
- * 36 months in jail
- * Nine years' probation
- * 200 hours of community service.



Get in Touch

Don't hesitate to contact us with comments or questions on anything that you read in **TICO Talk**, or about a travel industry issue. Your opinions and concerns matter. We can be reached at **(905) 624-6241**, or at **1-888-451-TICO**, or by email at tico@tico.ca.

Upcoming Issues

In future issues of **TICO TALK** we plan to include:

- Update on Legislative & Regulatory Review
- Trade Shows and upcoming events
- Update on Consumer Awareness Campaign.

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Closing Doors

Primera Air, with offices located in Latvia and Denmark, announced that it had ceased operations as of October 1, 2018. Consumers who purchased Primera Air travel services from a registered Ontario travel agency but did not receive their travel services, and have not been reimbursed, may file a claim from the Ontario Travel Industry Compensation Fund.

There is no provision for a consumer to claim on the Compensation Fund when they purchased travel services directly from an airline.

To request a claim form from TICO against the Compensation Fund, consumers are advised to contact TICO to request a claim form at: 1-800-451-8425 or (905) 624-624, or email: tico@tico.ca.

Please note that there is a legislated 6-month claim filing deadline, which is April 2, 2019. ▲



Introducing the 2019 Consumer Awareness Campaign... continued from page 1

In addition, TICO has purchased advertising space on the video screens in the PATH system in downtown Toronto, along with a full-page advertorial in Horizon magazine, focused on the benefits of booking with a TICO-registered travel agency or website, which was inserted in the November 29th issue of the *Toronto Star*.

Our campaign will also be reflected in social media. If you don't already follow TICO on social media, please check out our [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) pages and follow us. Engaging with TICO will send a message to your consumers that they have made a smart decision to book with you. In turn, TICO is always looking to engage and interact with registrants on travel-related topics on any of these platforms.

To top it all off, we are ramping up our media relations efforts by providing travel insight and advice on local radio shows. So, tune into your favourite show on your way to work and perhaps you'll hear Richard Smart or Dorian Werda as they dish out travel tips for consumers.

Throughout the campaign, TICO will be measuring consumer awareness through digital surveys. In addition, at the end of the campaign, TICO will conduct its annual Omnibus survey to compare the effectiveness of this year's campaign with last year's results.

The Consumer Awareness Campaign runs from December 10, 2018 to March 31, 2019. We hope you enjoy it! Stay tuned for collateral to support the campaign and show consumers the benefits of booking with you. ▲