

## **Tour guiding**

Tour guides escort individuals or groups on sightseeing tours or through places of interest, such as industrial establishments, public buildings, and art galleries.

### **Work Environment**

Tour guides may work a 40-hour week, or do shift work, including evenings and weekends, work part time, or work only during the peak season

Work outside in all weather conditions, or inside a museum or other attraction

Travel for their job, locally or nationally.

Tour guides may do some or all of the following:

- Escort people on trips or tours, including tours into natural areas
- Describe and explain points of interest on the trip/tour
- Arrange entry to places such as museums, government buildings and exhibitions
- Answer questions and give out written information
- Arrange or prepare meals and accommodation
- Drive a vehicle such as a bus or coach
- Act as an interpreter

### **How to get Qualified**

The good news is that tour guides get most of their training on the job, which means there aren't many formal education requirements or other standards that must be met before employers will even consider hiring.

Of course, having broad knowledge of local history and attractions is a decided plus and, although usually not necessary, a background in theater or entertainment, or experience in teaching can also help greatly toward getting a first interview.

Part-time or occasional travel gigs also make this an excellent way to supplement a full-time job or as extra income for retirees. That said, there are some definite skills required to be a good travel guide, the chief one being excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

Tour guides must interact with groups of people, keeping them focused, entertained, and informed.

Successful travel guides will also have a great deal of leadership ability. Above all, they must be able coordinate with local attractions to organize trips and outings so that they happen seamlessly.

Communication and interpersonal skills are critical for tour guides. Individuals who are multi lingual are also the highest in demand.

## **Job Outlook**

The travel and tourism industry is expanding and is expected to continue its growth through 2016, although the recent economic downswing has dampened this growth to some extent. The market for package tours and special-interest tours, such as nature tours, wildlife tours, or architectural tours, is growing. This should create the need for more of these types of tours, and therefore, more tour guides.

Even though tourism is on the rise, prospective tour guides should realize that there is intense competition in this field. Tour guide jobs, because of the obvious benefits, are highly sought after, so the beginning job seeker usually finds it difficult to break into the business. It is also important to remember that the travel and tourism industry is affected by the overall economy. When the economy is depressed, people have less money to spend and, therefore, travel less. They may take shorter tours instead of multiday trips, which will reduce revenue for tour guides.