

INFO CITQ
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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

In taking on the role of president of the CITQ Board of Directors, an organization I have been actively involved in for many years, I am pursuing the work undertaken by my predecessors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their exceptional contribution to a resounding success, something we can all take pride in: the implementation and application of the official classification of tourist accommodations in Québec.

Such a strong foundation, and the help of my colleagues on the Board, will allow me to face with confidence the many challenges to come during my term as president. Together we will make sure that the CITQ remains efficient in fulfilling its mandate as official manager of tourist accommodation classification. We will also support the CITQ in its efforts to remain at the cutting edge of its sector of activity, keeping our finger on the pulse of both the accommodation community and the travellers. More generally, we will help the CITQ establish productive partnerships so that classification may continue to play an essential role in the development of the tourist industry.

These are the main tasks to which the CITQ Board shall devote itself. All categories of establishments classified by the CITQ are now represented on the Board and I would like to welcome the newcomers and encourage them, along with the senior members of our Board, to take an active part in the meetings and assemblies that will be held throughout the coming year.

In closing, I would like to say a special word to accommodation operators and ask them to maintain their excellent collaboration to the success of the official classification program, a unique instrument in the service of accommodation quality.

I wish you all a wonderful summer!

Sincerely yours,

Jean Authier

THE 2004 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The CITQ Board of Directors is made up of the sectoral associations from all categories of establishments it classifies. This year, several new members have joined the Board. For more details on the composition of the 2004 CITQ Board of Directors, please visit our website at www.citq.gc.ca and click on the "Administration" tab.

DID YOU KNOW?

During the summer season, each CITQ classification agent will, on average, visit more than 15 establishments every week.

Each year, classification agents cover some 300,000 kilometres to visit over 3,000 establishments. The extent of the territory covered, the seasonal nature of many establishments, and the significant number of establishments that must be visited dictate a very tight schedule.

This is why it is so important to keep the appointment you make with the classification agent for visiting your establishment. Without this visit, Tourisme Québec will not deliver nor renew the classification certificate required by law.

IN THIS ISSUE, DON'T MISS...

The classification visit from A to Z: everything you need to know on the various stages of a classification visit and what you can do to increase the visit's efficiency (pp. 2-4).

Answers to your questions on the posting of rates and on services for persons with limited physical ability (p.4).

Our new column gives classification agents the opportunity to report on useful tips and ideas collected on visits to various establishments (p.4).

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THE CLASSIFICATION VISIT FROM A TO Z

A VISIT MANDATED BY LAW

Since the Act Respecting Tourist Accommodation Establishments was passed, hotel establishments, bed & breakfast establishments, tourist homes, resorts, hospitality villages and youth hostels must be visited by a CITQ classification agent every two years, while educational institutions are visited every four years.

In the case of an initial classification request, the classification visit must be made within 30 days following the opening of the case file.

In the case of a certificate renewal, the classification visit must be made during the last year for which the certificate is valid, **but never during the last two months of the certificate's period of validity.**

PLEASE NOTE: The classification visit is mandatory to obtain or renew the classification certificate (sign) mandated by law.

AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT

A few days ahead, the classification agent will phone the holder to set a date for the visit of the establishment. It is important to promptly return any call from the classification agent, as visit schedules are always extremely tight.

PLEASE NOTE: Refusing the visit of the classification agent for no valid reason, or ignoring his calls, could be considered as a refusal of classification and could have unfortunate consequences.

PREPARING FOR THE CLASSIFICATION AGENT'S VISIT

In order to ensure that his visit will be efficient, the classification agent will have taken the precaution, when calling to set an appointment, to ask the operator to prepare the following:

- Hotel establishments: a list of the various room categories;
- Bed & breakfast establishments: a breakfast table prepared for two (no perishables), descriptive photographs of the breakfast during the service, photographs of the landscaping, if the visit is made off-season;

- Multiple-unit tourist homes: a list of the various accommodation groupings according to the number of rooms and the number of complete bathrooms;
- Resorts: a list of accommodation groupings and a list of accessible sanitary fixtures;
- Youth hostels: a list of accommodation groupings and a list of accessible sanitary fixtures.
- Hospitality villages: a list of hospitality residences according to established criteria;
- Educational institutions: a list of accommodation groupings and of accessible sanitary fixtures.

IMPORTANT: Whatever the category of establishment, always make sure that the holder or a person in charge will be available to welcome the classification agent and accompany him during his visit. It is also important, before the actual visit, to buy and put into place such sanitary and safety materials as mattress and pillow covers, smoke detectors, and portable fire extinguishers.

FIRST STAGE OF THE VISIT: VERIFYING THE STATUS OF THE CASE FILE

Before proceeding to the visit as such, the classification agent must verify with the holder or his representative:

- All administrative information (contact information, holder, number of units, etc.);
- The declaration of activities and services (essential for ensuring the accuracy of the information published on bonjourquebec.com and in the Hébergement Québec directory);
- Record of complaints, if any;
- The availability of services and facilities for persons with limited physical ability (Kéroul), if any.

SECOND STAGE OF THE VISIT: APPLYING HUNDREDS OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

In whatever order the classification agent chooses to proceed, the classification visit essentially consists in measuring the quality of the material installations, services, and sanitary as well as safety conditions an establishment provides.

A thorough examination of the quality of the facilities

To measure the quality of the facilities, the classification agent will assess not only the quality of the materials used, but also the visual appearance of the facilities. The classification agent will examine this very thoroughly. For example, when visiting a hotel or a B&B, the classification agent will review more than 40 elements in bedrooms, and over 20 in bathrooms.

Examples of material facilities assessed by the CITQ classification agent:

- Bedrooms and bathrooms;
- Public spaces (entry hall, waiting areas, meeting rooms, reception rooms, sitting rooms, exercise rooms, etc.);
- Outside appearance of buildings;
- Landscaping;
- Parking facilities.

PLEASE NOTE: Classification agents visit and assess a predetermined percentage of units, representative of the accommodation, and selected at random. In the case of B&Bs, all accommodation units will be visited and assessed.

A detailed inventory of available services

While material facilities make up the bulk of the classification grids used by CITQ agents, all the services that an establishment provides also receive consideration.

Examples of services the CITQ classification agent will index:

- Reception services (conciierge, doorman, valet, receptionist, etc.);
- Business services;
- Food and beverage services;
- Various services that add to the guest's comfort (ironing board, hair dryer, spa, pool, etc.);
- Facilitation services for certain categories of establishments.

PLEASE NOTE: This inventory of services is the necessary first step to the eventual addition of a quality program that would rate service delivery, i.e. the dedication and efficiency of personnel in delivering those services.

Sanitary conditions

Several studies, among them one conducted by the CITQ through focus groups held last year, have shown that clients attach a high value to sanitary conditions. The CITQ classification grids take this aspect into account in evaluating an establishment.

Examples of sanitary issues assessed by the CITQ classification agent:

- Bedding materials, such as mattress and pillow covers;
- Stains, molds and mildew;
- Dust;
- Foul odours.

Safety

Although building safety falls under other jurisdictions (*Régie du bâtiment*, municipal fire departments, etc.), the CITQ classification grids also assess certain aspects relating to the safety of the travelling public.

Examples of safety-related elements indexed by the CITQ classification agent:

- Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers;
- Door locks and safes;
- Night lighting;
- First aid kits;
- Security windows for basement rooms.

PLEASE NOTE: The CITQ also makes it mandatory for all operators of tourist accommodation establishments to have civil liability insurance coverage for a minimum of 2 million \$.

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DURATION OF A VISIT

It goes without saying that the greater the number of units in a given establishment, and the greater the range of services it provides, the longer the classification visit will take. The minimum and maximum duration of a visit for each category of establishment is as follow:

- Hotel establishments: from 2 hours to a day and a half;
- Bed and breakfast establishments: about 2 hours;
- Tourist homes: about 1 hour per unit;
- Resorts: from 3 hours to a day;
- Youth hostels: about 3 hours;

- Hospitality villages: one day;
- Educational institutions: from 3 hours to a day.

IS IT MANDATORY TO POST RATES IN EACH ROOM?

NO. Since the Act Respecting Tourist Accommodation Establishments and its attendant Regulation have come into effect, it is no longer mandatory to post rates in each room. However, the rate grid must be permanently posted conspicuously in a location used to welcome and register guests. Please remember that under the Act, the sign attesting to the classification of a tourist accommodation establishment must be permanently posted in a conspicuous place outside the establishment.

DOES ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED PHYSICAL ABILITY HAVE ANY IMPACT ON CLASSIFICATION?

YES. As part of its partnership with Kéroul, the CITQ has agreed to evaluate accessibility for persons with limited physical ability in the establishments it visits. However, it is important to know that in the case of rooms and bathrooms, only those that are fully adapted will give additional points during the evaluation of an establishment. Kéroul will be happy to answer your questions and provide you with more information on that matter. You can reach them by phone at (514) 252-3104. You can also visit their website at www.keroul.qc.ca.

USEFUL TIPS AND IDEAS

More and more, operators are calling upon their guests' environmental awareness.

The CITQ wishes to congratulate them, and encourages others to join them in this collective effort.

Seen in a Québec area hotel, this message in favour of environmental protection.

A noble gesture for a noble river

Imagine the number of towels that must be washed every day in all the hotels throughout the city. Think about the enormous quantities of detergent that end up in the St. Lawrence River. You can help us help the environment.

Towels on the shower floors tell us "Please change". Towels returned to the towel rack tell us "I'll use them again to protect the environment".

On behalf of the St-Lawrence... we thank you for your cooperation!

HÔTEL GERMAIN DES PRÉS

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Source: Service des communications de la CITQ