

Article 1 - Object and applicability

1.1. This by-law establishes rules for offering and providing guided walking tours organised for tourists in the municipal area of the City of Bruges. It concerns guided walks for tourists where explanations or guidance are provided about the city or on what the city offers in terms of culture or tourism.

1.2. The following walking tours are subject to this by-law:

- those that are specifically requested, take place at specific pre-announced times or that take place somewhere whenever there is a sufficient number of interested persons;
- those that are part of organised group tours or programmes and also when the walking tour is provided by a guide who accompanies the group;
- those that take place in exchange for payment, even when participants are only invited to make a voluntary contribution or give a tip.

1.3. The following walking tours are not subject to this by-law:

- walking tours provided for private purposes, for your own family, acquaintances or guests;
- tours offered in an educational context by teachers for pupils or students.

Article 2 - Permit and compulsory authorisation

2.1. Nobody may organise walking tours as referred to in article 1 without having acquired a permit for this purpose from the Mayor. An organiser is considered to be: a person, company, organisation or association that offers walking tours and arranges and coordinates guides who provide this (and/or who provide the walking tour themselves).

2.2. Nobody may guide walking tours as referred to in article 1 without having acquired authorisation for this purpose from the Mayor. A guide is considered as: a person who escorts, leads or guides the participants on a walking tour, irrespective of whether he or she is the organiser or is acting under the instructions or on behalf of an organiser.

Article 3 - Permit for walking tour organisers

3.1. Applications for the walking tour organiser's permit can be made online via the city website (www.visitbruges.be).

3.2. Applicants should enter their details and also give their word of honour:

- that they have met all legal requirements (tax, employment and social law, etc) for both themselves and the guides who they engage;
- that they have taken out civil liability insurance for both themselves and for the guides who they engage;
- that they are acquainted with this by-law, will comply with it and will also supervise the compliance of the by-law by the guides who they engage.

3.3. Where appropriate, an applicant may be asked to provide supporting documents that confirm the information referred to in article 3.2.

3.4. The permit is individual and non-transferrable. In principle, it is valid for an unlimited period, except where the permit has been temporarily or permanently withdrawn.

Article 4 - Authorisation for walking tour guide

4.1. Applications for the walking tour guide's authorisation can be made online via the city website (www.visitbruges.be).

4.2. Applicants must provide their details and also give their word of honour that they are acquainted with this by-law and will comply with its provisions.

4.3. The walking tour guide's authorisation is issued in the form of a badge provided by the city (VisitBruges). It is individual and non-transferrable. In principle, it is valid for an unlimited period, except where it has been temporarily or permanently withdrawn.

Article 5 - Provisions concerning public order, tranquillity, safety, annoyance and the image of the City of Bruges

5.1. The organisers of walking tours give their assurance that the tour will be performed at the time, in the place and in the manner agreed or as stated in their communication.

5.2. The organisers of walking tours and their guides may not tout or approach potential customers in public spaces. They may also not engage other persons to tout for customers or approach members of the public.

5.3. The guide will always act courteously towards participants of the walking tour and towards other people.

5.4. The guide will refrain from making remarks to participants on a walking tour which could be offensive or hurtful.

5.5. The guide will monitor the conduct of the group members. Their conduct may not disturb or cause inconvenience to public order, tranquillity and safety. Should this occur, the guide will end the walking tour.

5.6. The guide will observe the road traffic rules and regulations during the walking tour. The guide may not stop or control traffic. Neither the guide nor the group may stop on the road to take photographs or provide or listen to explanations respectively.

5.7. Guides on walking tours should not cause inconvenience to others through excessive noise. It is prohibited to use sound amplification. An audio system with earphones (headset) must be used for groups of 25 participants or above.

5.8. It is prohibited to use street furniture (benches, rubbish bins, lamp posts) for addressing participants on the walking tour.

Article 6 - Provisions regarding communication, promotional and visual information

6.1. Walking tour guides will always wear the badge provided by the City of Bruges during the walking tour.

6.2. It is prohibited to place objects on public roads. Visual and promotional information on other media belonging to the organiser and guide are restricted to stating the logo or the company name of the organiser. The 'I' that denotes the official tourist information offices may not be used on any promotional information or medium, either in this form or in any other derived form.

6.3. Participants on a guided walking tour will be informed in advance in an unambiguous and non-misleading manner about the concept of the walking tour and the associated fee, contribution or charge.

6.4. A permit or authorisation does not automatically grant the recipients the right to promotion or to generate bookings via the channels of the City of Bruges. Separate conditions apply to this, which involve matters such as availability, language provisions and conformity with the positioning and target group strategy of the city.

6.5. Any complaints about a walking tour for tourists that are directed to the organiser via the City of Bruges will be seriously investigated by the organiser who must send a written response to the City of Bruges (VisitBruges) within 10 days of receipt of the complaint.

Article 7 - Special provisions

7.1. The organiser will ensure that his/her guides comply with the provisions of this by-law and will take any required measures in this regard.

7.2. Guides should be engaged correctly in accordance with the law (employment, social and tax law, etc.).

7.3. The Mayor may fully or partially prohibit walking tours or may determine special conditions following any circumstances or events in the interest of public order, tranquillity, safety or health. In such cases, neither the organiser nor the guide will be able to make any claim for compensation.

Article 8 - Supervision, sanctions and other measures

8.1. Breaches of this by-law will be investigated and determined by the police and the competent officials.

8.2. Breaches of this by-law may:

- be punished by the authorised official with a municipal administrative penalty of up to € 250, in accordance with the city framework regulation on municipal administrative sanctions;
- be punished by the Municipal Executive with a temporary suspension or definitive cancellation of the permit for organisers or the authorisation for guides.

8.3. In addition to the aforementioned sanctions, the Municipal Executive may decide to:

- exclude the respective organiser or guide from participating in walking tours for tourists that are developed as part of city activities;
- no longer accept the respective organiser in the city's booking channels and promotional announcements.

Article 9 - Entry into effect

9.1. The required permit for organisers (see article 3) and authorisation for guides (see article 4) may be requested from the date on which this by-law is approved.

9.2. This by-law enters into effect on 1 January 2018. From this date onwards, organisers and guides must possess the required permit and/or authorisation respectively and must also strictly observe all other provisions of this bylaw.