

Below are the standards and descriptions that must be met in order to earn your CSTO certification. This checklist is for your records and tracking purposes only. All mandatory standards listed below must be marked Y-Yes. The only exception is ADM- Consumer Protection Education. The certification assessment may take place without this standard achieved but must then be completed by the organization's Principal attending the next scheduled Consumer Protection Awareness seminar. Certification will be issued once the seminar was completed and attendance verification received by SYTA.

Y or N	Section	Standard Description
	ADM	Minimum Student & Revenue
	ADM	Background Check, Organization's Principals
	ADM	Consumer Protection Education (completed or next available seminar)
	ADM	Business License and Mailing Address
	ADM	Laws, Regulations and Licensing
	ADM	Organization Insurance
	ADM	Code of Ethics
	CRP	Crisis Response Plan and Training
	CRP	Crisis Response Simulation Training

Your travel organization must meet at least 16 of the 22 elective standards listed below to achieve and maintain SYTA Certified Student Travel Organization status.

Y or N	Section	Standard Description
	ADM	Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Training
	ADM	Child Abuse Prevention Plan
	BUS	Seat Belt Usage
	BUS	FMCSA Safety Briefing
	BUS	Motorcoach Facility and Equipment Assessment
	CUS	Tour Satisfaction Survey
	CUS	Family Assistance and Support
	HTL	Emergency Evacuation Briefing
	HTL	Accommodation Property Assessment
	MED	Health Information Management
	MED	American Disability Act (ADA) Specialist
	MED	Health Information Portability and Accountability Act Specialist
	RST	Dining Facility Assessment
	SAF	Staff Background Checks
	SAF	Swimming Safety
	SAF	First Aid, CPR and AED Training
	SAF	Incident Reporting and Response Procedure
	SAF	Annual Incident Analysis
	SAF	Lost Tour Participant Protocol
	SAF	Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders
	SAF	Attraction and Venue Effective Practices
	SEC	Security Organization Assessment

_____ Total Number of Elective Standards Achieved

Below is a description for each standard and the documentation/records that must be submitted with your application or prepared for the certification on-site visit. Please read through each description carefully to ensure you have the correct documentation to meet each standard.

Mandatory Standards

1. ADM - Minimum Student & Revenue

The travel organization must provide proof that they meet the following requirements;

- a. Have been in business for a minimum of 3 years.
 - a. UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - i. Valid business license, articles of incorporation and/or articles of organization proving the 3 year in business requirement.
- b. The travel organization must have provided travel for a minimum of 750 students in the previous year, and/or financial documentation that they realized revenues of at least \$500,000 from student and youth tours in the previous fiscal year.
 - a. UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - i. Documented proof of traveling a minimum of 750 students or documentation of revenues of at least \$500,000 from student and youth tours in the previous fiscal year. Documentation could include:
 - a. A report of number of groups with number of students or a financial report that shows the revenue

2. ADM - Background Check, Organization's Principals

Every three years a credit and background check must be completed for each of the travel organization's principal's to confirm the absence of a bankruptcy during the previous five years and the absence of a conviction or no-contest plea for any offense of fraud, deception, breach of trust, child abuse, or felony during the previous three years.

- ☐ UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - Copy of credit report (receipt that the credit report was completed will not be sufficient)
 - Copy of the background check results (receipt that the background check was completed will not be sufficient).

3. ADM – Consumer Protection Education

The travel organization principal(s) or key operations officer(s) must address consumer protection by having completed one of the following options, at some point during the previous three years;

1. UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:

- a. **OPTION 1:** Proof that the principal of your travel organization has attended, or plans to attend the next scheduled Consumer Protection Awareness seminar covering at least the following topics;
 - Benefits of placing all customer payments in an escrow account until paid as tour expenses or earned as income by the company.
 - Trip insurance options covering the client's investment.
 - Understanding why Consumer Protection programs are vital to the student travel industry.
 - Bond options to protect the client's investment.
- b. **OPTION 2:** Documentation showing travel organization is a member of USTOA, TICO, or another association with a SYTA-approved consumer protection plan.
- c. **OPTION 3:** Evidence that the company has obtained an unqualified audit from an independent CPA/Chartered Accountant within the previous 12 months, and that audit, along with previous unqualified audits as needed, must indicate that the travel organization was profitable for at least two of the previous four years and that the travel organization has a positive net worth as of the most recent audited year-end.
- d. **OPTION 4:** Company places all payments in an escrow account until paid as tour expenses or earned as income by the company.
- e. **OPTION 5:** International organizations that participate in a licensed bonding program or some type of consumer protection plan may submit documentation as proof.

4. ADM – Business License and Mailing Address

The travel organization must be single business entity. The travel organization must also provide proof of an established mailing address that may include a P.O. Box.

- ☐ UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - Documented proof of article of incorporation or another document establishing legal name.
 - Documented proof of established mailing address (may include a P.O. Box)

5. ADM – Laws, Regulations and Licensing

The travel organization must sign the SYTA Code of Ethics Disclosure Statement that states the travel organization complies with all laws, regulations and licensing requirements applicable to the operation of the business. Disclosure Statement available at SYTA.org under Resources.

- ☐ UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - Signed copy of the SYTA Code of Ethics

6. ADM – Organization Insurance

The travel organization must have Errors and Omissions (Professional Liability) insurance of no less than \$1 million (or equivalent for country) per occurrence and current General Liability insurance of no less than US \$1 million (or equivalent for country) per occurrence.

- ☐ UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - Proof of current Errors and Omissions insurance
 - Proof of general liability insurance

7. ADM – Code of Ethics

The travel organization must sign the SYTA code of ethics statement that states the travel organization is committed to and abides by the SYTA Code of ethics in regards to: honesty, honor and integrity * truth in advertising * terms & conditions disclosure * commitment to satisfaction * professional conduct * compliance with laws * and pledge of loyalty and has no current claims against the organization to the contrary. Disclosure statement available at SYTA .org under Resources.

- ☐ UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - Signed copy SYTA Code of Ethics

8. CRP – Crisis Response Plan and Training

The travel organization must have a current crisis plan designed to effectively respond to and manage a critical situation. The travel organization must also provide annual training of all staff. NOTE: During the certification on-site visit, the key operations officer shall explain any variation in delivered training based on the job duties and responsibilities of the various attendees.

- ☐ UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - Copy of current crisis response plan
- ☐ PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:
 - Training materials for annual Crisis Response Plan training
 - Training attendance rosters for annual Crisis Response Plan training

9. CRP – Crisis Response Simulation Training

The travel organization must conduct or participate in an annual desktop simulated crisis response exercise in one year and a full simulation of a crisis response effort the following year. NOTE: During the re-certification every three years, evidence of alternate training of a desktop simulation in one year and full simulation in the following year, must be provided for each of the previous three years.

- ☐ UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:
 - Documented proof of current crisis response training plans for desktop and full simulation
- ☐ PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:
 - Training materials for annual simulation training
 - Training attendance rosters for annual simulation training

Elective Standards

Travel organizations must meet at least 16 of the twenty-two standards listed in this section to achieve and maintain SYTA Certified Student Travel Organization status. SYTA encourages all organizations to strive for 100% compliance.

1. ADM – Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Training

The travel organization must actively promote its non-discrimination and harassment policies with all employees and tour guides while promoting an equal opportunity policy to staff.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current non-discrimination and harassment prevention policies based on race, color, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or age.
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for non-discrimination and harassment policies
 - Training attendance rosters for non-discrimination and harassment policies with employees and tour guides (these will be cross-referenced with tour rosters for spot certification that the traveling staff attended the training)

2. ADM - Child Abuse Prevention Plan

The travel organization must have and actively promote its Child Abuse Prevention Plan and Harassment Policies with all employees and tour guides. Documented training and attendance records for all staff will need to be provided and the ability to crosscheck those records with actual tour rosters to allow for spot certification that the tour director/staff assigned has received training.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of Child Abuse Prevention
 - Documented proof of Harassment Policies
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for child abuse prevention plan
 - Attendance rosters for trainings with employees and tour guides (these will be cross-referenced with tour rosters for spot certification that the traveling staff attended the training)

3. BUS – Seat Belt Usage

The travel organization must ensure every participant on a guided tour is informed of the value of wearing seat belts and strongly encouraged to do so, when seat belts are provided, to reduce the chance of serious injury. This applies for staff, tour guides and/or teachers who are informed through the “Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders” documents.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current seatbelt usage policy and bus announcement
 - Signed “Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders” document, if applicable
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for seat belt usage
 - Attendance rosters for trainings with employees and tour guides on seat belt usage (these will be cross-referenced with tour rosters for spot certification that the traveling staff attended the training)

4. BUS – FMCSA Safety Briefing

The travel organization must ensure that a pre-departure safety briefing is conducted for all guided groups, prior to departure from the origination point.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of pre-departure safety briefing
 - This may be an organization’s original form developed or the standard safety briefing developed by the Federal Motor Coach Safety Administration (FMCSA)
 - Documented proof of current policy, if applicable

5. BUS – Motorcoach Facility and Equipment Assessment

The travel organization, a peer organization, its agents, or its representatives, must ensure that all motorcoach operators used to transport their travelers are visited and a SYTA Vendor Motorcoach Safety Assessment is completed, prior to the initial use of the service. A new assessment must be completed at least every 36-months thereafter.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - SYTA Vendor Motorcoach Safety Assessment
 - Or proof of an FMCSA safety visit within previous three years
 - travel organization must ensure a site self-assessment (completed by property management) or in-person assessment (completed by travel organization or agent representative) is completed prior to the initial contracted service of said property and at least every 36-months thereafter. The travel organization must make available documentation that can be cross checked to confirm the assessment was confirmed prior to booking the service
- ☐ **NOTE:** For tours booked for after 6/15/2020, this must be in effect to meet this standard. Tours booked for travel prior to 6/15/20 are exempt from this standard.

6. CUS – Tour Satisfaction Survey

The travel organization must have a formal process to solicit and collect customer feedback and satisfaction of their tours. This procedure must be in written policy. Review of customer feedback from a member at senior management level must occur annually.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of written process for collecting customer feedback
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Documented proof of customer survey and review of feedback
 - Records of annual review at a senior management level including steps take to address any areas of concern, if applicable

7. CUS – Family Assistance and Support

The travel organization must have a detailed family assistance plan to support tour participants and their families impacted by a crisis on tour.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of family assistance plan
 - Documented proof of any policies associated with family assistance plan, if applicable
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for Family Assistance and Support
 - Attendance rosters for Family Assistance and Support training

8. HTL – Emergency Evacuation Briefing

The travel organization must ensure an emergency evacuation and gathering point briefing takes place on arrival at all hotel and overnight accommodations. A primary and secondary gathering point should be identified during the briefing.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current emergency evacuation briefing, including announcement verbiage
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for Emergency Evacuation Briefing
 - Attendance rosters for Emergency Evacuation Briefing trainings (these will be cross-referenced with tour rosters for spot certification that the traveling staff attended the training)

9. HTL – Accommodation Property Assessment

The travel organization, a peer organization, its agents, or its representatives must ensure a site self-assessment (completed by property management) or in-person assessment (completed by travel organization or agent representative) is completed prior to the initial contracted service of said property and at least every 36-months thereafter. The travel organization must make available documentation that can be cross checked to confirm the assessment was confirmed prior to booking the service.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of SYTA Accommodation Property Assessment or organization specific form may be used
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for training on Accommodation Property Assessment
 - Attendance rosters for trainings on Accommodation Property Assessment (these will be cross-referenced with tour rosters for spot certification that the traveling staff attended the training)
- ☐ **NOTE:** For tours booked for after 6/15/2020, this must be in effect to meet this standard. Tours booked for travel prior to 6/15/20 are exempt from this standard.

10. MED – Health Information Management

The travel organization must collect pertinent health information in advance, and as necessary, to facilitate the tour. All tour staff must receive orientation training to ensure they understand the purpose for the information and the need to keep that information confidential, sharing only with those with a specific need to know. The medical information is subject to data protection rules and requirements and in accordance with FIRTA rules.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of medical information collection process must be provided
 - Documented proof of any policies associated with health information management, if applicable
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for Health Information Management
 - Attendance rosters for trainings for Health Information Management

11. MED – American Disability Act (ADA) Specialist

The travel organization will maintain at least one staff member trained in the American with Disabilities Act or may be trained in country specific laws if an international travel organization based in a country other than the United States. Annual orientation training will be completed by all staff involved with reviewing health information and those arranging for, or approving, reasonable accommodations for travelers.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current policy regarding ADA specialist within your organization
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for staff involved in reviewing health information
 - Attendance rosters for trainings for staff involved in reviewing health information

12. MED – Health Information Portability and Accountability Act Specialist

The travel organization must maintain at least one staff member trained in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or country specific data protection regulations, if an international travel organization based in a country other than the United States. Annual orientation training will be completed by all staff involved with reviewing health information and those arranging for, or approving, reasonable accommodations for travelers. On-site tour staff training may be informational in nature stressing the importance of keeping the private information confidential.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current policy regarding HIPPA specialist within your organization
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for annual staff trainings for those with a responsibility for handling medical information
 - Attendance rosters for annual staff trainings for those with a responsibility for handling medical information

13. RST – Dining Facility Assessment

The travel organization, a peer organization, its agents, or its representatives must ensure a completed site self-assessment (completed by property management) or an in-person assessment (completed by travel organization or agent representative), is completed prior to the initial contracted service of said property and completed at least every 36-months thereafter. The travel organization must make available documentation that can be crosschecked to confirm the assessment was confirmed prior to booking the service.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of STYA Dining Facility Safety Assessment or organization specific form
 - Documented proof of any policies associated with dining facility assessment, if applicable
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for training on Dining Facility Assessment
 - Attendance rosters for trainings on Dining Facility Assessment (these will be cross-referenced with tour rosters for spot certification that the traveling staff attended the training)
- ☐ **NOTE:** For tours booked for after 6/15/2020, this must be in effect to meet this standard. Tours booked for travel prior to 6/15/20 are exempt from this standard.

14. SAF – Staff Background Checks

Each adult working for, or contracted by the travel organization, who may be in direct contact with student tour participants, must have a completed background check within three-years prior to the trip to confirm no prior felony conviction, status as a sex offender, or history of child abuse. A copy of the current policy must be provided along with documents confirming a background check has been conducted and reviewed by the organization.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current background check policy
 - Copy of documents confirming a background check has been conducted and reviewed by the organization. IE: receipt, confirmation email, or other proof

15. SAF – Swimming Safety

The travel organization must adopt and actively promote a policy that states “During every swimming activity on tour, an American Red Cross (or national/international equivalent) certified life guard will be present to perform guardian duties during the entire activity”. If the tour is self-guided, then the use of the Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders must be used and documentation confirming it was shared with the client prior to the tour.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current swimming safety policy
 - Or documentation of use of “Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders” including process for sharing with client prior to the tour

16. SAF – First Aid, CPR and AED Training

The travel organization must ensure at least a minimum of one member of the tour leadership team be First Aid, CPR and AED American Red Cross (or national/international equivalent) certified. The travel organization must coordinate with the tour client in advance to ensure a qualified and certified First Aid, CPR and AED representative is scheduled to be present on tour. The travel organization may decide to require all tour directors to maintain First Aid, CPR and AED certification which would meet this standard.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof current policy on First Aid, CPR and AED Training
 - Documented proof of First Aid, CPR and AED certifications for a sampling of representatives

17. SAF – Incident Reporting and Response Procedure

The travel organization must establish and maintain an incident reporting and response procedure for all guided tours and conduct annual training for employees and contracted agents involved with the operation of tours.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current policy for incident reporting and response procedure
 - Documented proof of all recorded incidents
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for Incident Reporting and Response Procedure
 - Attendance rosters for trainings for Incident Reporting and Response Procedure (these will be cross-referenced with tour rosters for spot certification that the traveling staff attended the training)

18. SAF – Annual Incident Analysis

The travel organization must establish and maintain an incident analysis process to review all incidents that occur on tour, and near misses, on an annual basis in an effort to understand risks and threats inherent to their trips.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current policy in regard to annual incident analysis
 - Documented proof that the annual incident analysis was conducted and steps taken address concerning trends

19. SAF – Lost Tour Participant Protocol

The travel organization must establish a lost tour participant procedure. The procedure will list preventable steps to reduce the likelihood of becoming separated and will list steps to be taken in the event a student or group traveler becomes separated from the tour group. Documented proof of the current policy must be provided along with documented training and attendance records for all tour directors/staff involved in the actual tours and the ability to crosscheck those records with actual tour rosters to allow for spot certification that the tour director/staff assigned has received training.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current policy in regard lost tour participant protocol
- ☐ **PROVIDE DURING ON-SITE VISIT:**
 - Training materials for Lost Tour Participant Protocol
 - Attendance rosters for trainings for Lost Tour Participant Protocol (these will be cross-referenced with tour rosters for spot certification that the traveling staff attended the training)

20. SAF – Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders

The travel organization must establish a process to share effective practices on tour when clients are leading their own travel group. The SYTA “Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders” can be used or an alternate document developed by the travel organization. It is also highly recommended the policy calls for this information to be shared after the contract negotiations for the tour have concluded when it is a self-guided tour. It is highly recommended that both parties, the travel organization and the client, sign the document to confirm receipt and the sharing of this valuable information.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current policy demonstrating how your organization shares effective practices when clients are leading their own travel group and proof of implementation
 - “Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders” can be used

21. SAF – Attraction and Venue Effective Practices

The travel organization must establish a policy and process for sharing effective practices when visiting an amusement park, attraction or large venue. The SYTA “Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders” can be used or an alternate document developed by the travel organization. It is highly recommended the policy calls for this information being shared after the contract negotiations for the tour have concluded when it is a self-guided tour and visiting an attraction or Venue. It is highly recommended that both parties, the travel organization and the client, sign the document to confirm receipt and the sharing of this valuable information.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current policy demonstrating how your organization shares effective practices when visiting an amusement park, attraction, or large venue.
 - “Advice for Traveling Teacher Leaders” can be used

22. SEC – Security Organization Assessment

The travel organization, a peer organization, its agents, or its representatives must ensure a completed Security Organization Assessment has been completed for each security service provider or nighttime security firm providing hotel hallway or event security. The assessment must be conducted prior to contracting of the security services and at least every 36-months thereafter. The travel organization must make available documentation that can be cross checked to confirm the assessment was conducted prior to booking the service.

- ☐ **UPLOAD TO BASECAMP:**
 - Documented proof of current policy in regard to security organization assessment
- ☐ **NOTE:** For tours booked for after 6/15/2020, this must be in effect to meet this standard. Tours booked for travel prior to 6/15/20 are exempt from this standard.