

**Information on the new accommodation legislation
a guide for
BED AND BREAKFAST
Establishments**

What you need to know about the new tourism law

Recent legislation covering many aspects of Northern Ireland tourism includes important changes in regulations affecting people who are in business to provide tourist accommodation.





You will need to be familiar with these new requirements and this handy guide is designed to help you.

However, you should also consult the documents listed under 'Further Information' in this guide for a full account of the regulations and procedures.

The vital requirement: a certificate If you operate an establishment which provides or offers to provide tourism accommodation you must have an appropriate Northern Ireland Tourist Board Certificate. You cannot legally trade without one and the Tourist Board will strictly enforce this rule.

What the new arrangements are

There are now five statutory categories of tourist establishment:

-  **Hotels**
-  **Guesthouses**
-  **Bed and Breakfast establishments**
-  **Self-catering establishments**
-  **Hostels**

Minimum standards apply to each of these categories and you must fulfil the appropriate requirements to be eligible for allocation to one of them.

A statutory inspection will determine whether your premises meet the criteria laid down for your category.

These criteria are briefly summarised in this, one of a series of five leaflets covering the different categories. If this particular leaflet does not seem appropriate to you, the Tourist Board will send you another.

Remember: The requirements listed here are intended for guidance only; they are not comprehensive.

How existing establishments are affected

If your establishment was registered with the Tourist Board before 1 April 1992, it will be treated as having met the statutory criteria for the time being.

All tourist accommodation will undergo compliance inspection under a programme drawn up for the year 1992. An establishment which meets the prescribed standards will be confirmed in its category and issued with a certificate.

Any establishment failing to fulfil the criteria will have its certificate revoked and this will prohibit the proprietor from continuing to provide or offering to provide accommodation.

However, 30 days may be allowed for the standards to be met in full.

Procedure for new establishments

If you intend to offer tourist accommodation, you must apply to the Tourist Board to have your establishment allocated to one of the five categories listed earlier. It will then be inspected and, if the requirements are met, it will become a 'certified tourist establishment' in that classification. If it does not comply, the Tourist Board must refuse to allocate it to that particular category.

Regular statutory inspections

At least once a year your establishment will be inspected to ensure that the requirements appropriate to its category are met. If it appears that this is not the case, then the Tourist Board will revoke the certificate.

How to change from one category to another

Should you wish to change your category, say from B&B establishment to guesthouse, apply to the Tourist Board for a reclassification inspection. If the conditions are met, a new category certificate will be issued. If not, the current certificate remains in force.

Fees for inspection

A new scale of fees applies to the annual statutory inspection and any others requested by the proprietor. Fees now reflect the actual cost involved in carrying out inspections and vary from £1.50 for each bed in a hostel to £16 for each hotel bedroom.

Here is a summary:

Hotel

£16 per bedroom
(min. £200, max. £1500)

Guesthouse

£10 per bedroom
(min. £50, max. £150)

B&B establishment

£10 per bedroom
(min. £50, max. £150)

Self-catering

£25 per unit
(min. £25, max. £250)

Hostel

£1.50 per bed
(min. £25, max. £100)

Full details of fees are set out in the Tourist Establishments (Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 No. 136.

BED AND BREAKFAST

In essence, a B&B is an establishment which provides comfortable overnight accommodation for visitors in separate bedrooms. It must be capable of providing a cooked breakfast, at least.

The entrance, dining area, lounge, toilet/bathroom facilities and kitchen need to be adequate to cater for the number of visitors. Bedrooms must be numbered, or otherwise designated, and lockable. The owner's family and resident staff must have separate, clearly identified, accommodation.

All statutory requirements, such as Fire Authority and Environmental Health regulations, must be met and documentation available for inspection.

The establishment must be under the supervision of the proprietor, trained or experienced in bed and breakfast management, and staffed to maintain appropriate standards of service.

HOW THE NEW LAW AFFECT YOU

The main changes in the criteria for B&Bs following recent legislation are highlighted here, together with other requirements which deserve emphasis.

Bathrooms and Toilets

The number of facilities required is now calculated on the number of visitors and not on the number of bedrooms. Where there are bedrooms without ensuite bathrooms, the establishment must provide one bathroom for every ten visitors (or proportion of ten). The first of these must contain a bath, but others may be equipped with a shower instead.

Visitor's Register

As well as the name, address and date of arrival, the register must record each visitor's nationality and departure date.

Children

You must have high chairs or suitably adapted chairs available.

Display of Charges

The scale of charges for accommodation and other services (inclusive of VAT, where applicable) must be prominently displayed where it can be easily seen by visitors before, or immediately after, they enter. Where food is provided, the meals should be identified. If the charges vary seasonally, or if there are any conditions to be satisfied, these must also be shown.

Statutory Inspection Fees

Please take note of the new fees for statutory inspection shown in this leaflet, which are payable in advance. The registration fee for 1992 should be deducted from the amount due before the next inspection. You will be given advance information of the date this is to be carried out.

How new establishments are affected

Establishments seeking certification in the bed and breakfast category after 1 April 1992 must comply with all the requirements of the recent legislation. Details of these are contained in the documents listed below.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To obtain comprehensive information about the new law, you are advised to consult the following publications, which are available from HM Stationery Office, 16 Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GD.

The Tourism (Northern Ireland Order 1992

Statutory Inspection of Tourist Establishments (Fees) Regulations (NI) 1992 No.136

Certified Tourist Establishments (Visitors Register) Regulations (NI) 1992 No.137

Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) Regulations (NI) 1992 No.149

Tourist Establishments (Notices, Certificates and Forms) Regulations (NI) 1992 No.150

Certified Tourist Establishments (Display of Charges) Regulations (NI) 1992 No.184

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