

# Guideline for House Boats – Water Based Adventure Tourism Activities

## For Registration with Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Houseboat is a sailing accommodation with adequate facilities cruise along the lakes, rivers, canals, or lagoon network. Unique feature of the house boating is breath taking view of scenery of the water body bank and exploring the rural experience.

The Kerala Province of south India is a major operator of house boats in backwaters of the rivers in Kerala.

House boat is also called as "Kettu Vallam" in Malayalam, means "tie boat". The house boat is major tourist attraction and popular mode of exploring attractions of backwaters in India.

### 2. BASIC OPERATING PROCEDURE / GUIDELINE

- a) House boat could be in various shapes and sizes depending on the facilities such as bedroom with attached bathroom, living area, kitchen, and open deck.
- b) Traditional house boat is 60 to 70 ft. long and 13 to 15 ft. wide at the beam. Minimum height of the highest point should be 10 ft. and width of the common passage should be minimum of 03 ft.
- c) The boat is made from planks of water-resistant wood such as jackfruit tree tide together with coconut fiber. As a protection code of black resin extracted from cashew nut shell will applied to the wooden planks.
- d) Traditionally bamboo mats, polls, thin wood, and palm leaves are used for roofing and solid wood or marine plywood, wooden planks, and coir mats for the flooring.
- e) In modern construction hull of the boat is built of water resistance wood or reinforced fiber glass with adequate storage areas for water for general use storage of waste water and sewage.
- f) Recommended to provide sun deck facility for the on-board passengers. Lighting could be from solar panel or powered by small outward engine. Fuel storage should be away from the kitchen.
- g) The engine or motors of the boat should mainly operate on petrol/diesel.
- h) No kerosene powered engines will be permitted for propulsion or for generating power of the boat.
- i) Size of the bed room in houseboat should not be less than the specifications mentioned below
  - a. Bed Room: 80 sq. ft (minimum width — 8 ft)
  - b. Living or Dining area: 80 sq. ft.
  - c. Attached Bathroom: 20 sq. ft. (minimum width 4 ft)
  - d. Kitchen: 20 sq. ft
- j) Bedrooms should be provided with attached bathroom with Water Closet (WC) for guests. Bedroom doors should be provided with locks and safety chains.
- k) Bedrooms should be provided with electric ceiling or wall mounted fan, mosquito screens or nets.
- l) The bathroom floor should be impervious to water.
- m) Availability of the space on board mini cold storage facility could be provided to store fish, meat, dairy product etc.

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- n) Storage facilities in the kitchen must be clean and hygienic. Work station top for preparation of food should be of stainless steel. Food and perishable materials on board should be packed hygienically and stored in a clean and ventilated environment.
- o) Clean and good quality linen, cutlery, crockery glassware and toiletries should be provided.
- p) Bottled water or water dispensers with purified water for drinking purposes should be provided.
- q) A system for separating biodegradable from non-biodegradable garbage should be provided. Garbage should be disposed only in such locations provided for the purpose.
- r) Kitchen waste water should be disposed in to the waste water chamber.
- s) Sewage should be disposed in to chemical chambers and retained until discharged in to shore based facilities, specially designed to handle such material.
- t) Paper bags or cloth bags and other bio-degradable alternatives should be used, instead of polythene bags.

### **3.MANDATORY EQUIPMENT**

- a) The general construction of the houseboat should have distinctive quality fittings and fixtures.
- b) The houseboat should be furnished with superior quality carpets, curtains, linen, furniture, cutlery, crockery, and glassware etc.
- c) Provision should be available for air-conditioning and running hot and cold water at all times.
- d) Alternate sources of energy in place of fuel, such as solar power to be used for heating, lighting etc.
- e) The boat must have at least two fire extinguishers in the common areas and one extinguisher in the kitchen and preferably 02 buckets with sand for any fire emergency.
- f) A mobile communication facility should be available on board to communicate with land-based service centers.

### **4. SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

- a) The houseboat should have life jacket for each passenger.
- b) Adopt safe refueling methods for avoiding fire hazards and contamination of water.
- c) When the boat is anchored during nights a blinking red light should be prominently displayed on the roof of the house boat.
- d) A dingy fitted with an outboard motor to be attached to the houseboat in operation for emergency purposes.

### **5. GENERAL INFORMATION**

- a) Each passenger travelling in a houseboat should be covered under an adequate public liability insurance.
- b) Guest Register should be maintained with relevant details of the on-board passengers.
- c) Houseboats must maintain a log book containing information on the movement of the houseboat including time routine.
- d) All measures possible measures should be taken to always guarantee privacy of guests. The staff should be briefed with regard to interaction with the passengers.

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- e) Cruising after sunset/night is strictly prohibited other than in emergency situations. On such situations the house boat should display a rotating hazard light on top of the roof.
- f) Name and approval number of the boat should be painted on both sides of the houseboat.

#### **6. STAFF**

- a) The house boat crew will comprise minimum of oarsmen, boatmens, cook and tour guide.
- b) A rest room with bunk beds, lockers, toilet with shower area should be provided for the staff.
- c) Staff members should be experienced in guest relations and be fluent in spoken English.
  
- d) All staff members should be in uniform attire.

#### **7. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR REGISTRATION**

- a) On submission of following mandatory documents, the officials of SLTDA will inspect the houseboat to ascertain the minimum requirement of the houseboat.
  - i. Business Registration
  - ii. Approvals from the Irrigation Department or Department of Fisheries or any other relevant authorities to operate the houseboat.
  - iii. The operator should display the Registration and License certificate on board of the houseboat.
  - iv. The license issued by SLTDA is valid for one (01) year and should renew the license annually.