

info CITO

Corporation de l'industrie touristique du Québec

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UNCLEANLINESS

Uncleanliness tops the list of customer complaints

Throughout the year, the CITO receives dozens of complaints from customers who are unhappy with their stay in one of Quebec's tourist accommodation establishments. In 2011, the CITO handled 81 complaints, and cleanliness continued to rank first among customers' concerns.

See the table of complaints, inside.



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Ten years of official classification!

In January, as it was concluding its fifth classification tour since the *Act respecting tourist accommodation establishments* was adopted in 2001, the CITO took stock of its ten years of official classification.

Among other findings, these classification tours of nearly 6,000 tourist accommodation establishments throughout Quebec revealed:

- an increase in the proportion of establishments with higher rankings in the hotel and bed & breakfast classes,
- an increase or decrease in the number of establishments in several classes.

See inside for more details.



THE CITO IS
AWARDED A
MANDATE FROM
HÔTELLERIE
CHAMPÊTRE

The CITO and Hôtellerie Champêtre recently signed an agreement under which the CITO will be invited to help update and apply the standards in effect at Hôtellerie Champêtre establishments. The CITO is proud to contribute to the success of this Quebec label, which promotes top-quality resorts and country inns.



Message
from the Executive Director

The CITQ is proud to have recently completed ten years of mandatory classification. Over the past decade we have conducted and followed up on more than 30,000 classification visits to nearly 6,000 establishments throughout Quebec.

I have often taken part in these tours, and I am pleased to say that we have found that most operators are very satisfied with the work done by the CITQ. As proof, consider that in those ten years, only one operator has appealed his classification, and an independent jury upheld the rating assigned him by the CITQ.

All this success is the payoff for the immense efforts we have made over the years to offer quality service and remain attentive to both consumers' and operators' needs. After broad-based consultations, we have designed and regularly updated classification grids that our experienced classifiers apply rigorously, with the utmost professionalism.

We have also created a wide range of value-added services, extending far beyond simply classifying establishments. Every day, our staff answer operators' questions and provide original and proven assistance services for operators looking to improve their classification results. Year in, year out, over 250 operators use our detail letters service and more than 50 others call on our planning service.

The quality of the service we provide and our readiness to offer assistance have won us the trust of an increasingly varied clientele. The CITQ's clients now include Tourisme Québec, for the classification of tourist accommodation, the Association maritime du Québec, for marina classification and Eco-marina certification, the Quebec Golf Course Owners Association, for golf course classification, the Association des hôteliers du Québec, for *RéserVert* recognition, the Hotel Association of Canada, for *Green Key* certification, Vélo Québec, for *Bienvenue cyclistes!* certification, and now Hôtellerie Champêtre.

We have other plans on the drawing board, to be announced in the relatively short term. In other words, we have every reason to have confidence in the future. Let me take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributes to the success of the CITQ in any way.



Michel Rheault

TEN YEARS OF OI

More superior-level establishments

Between January 2004, when we wrapped up our first classification tour, and January 2012, the end of the last tour, the proportion of hotel establishments with 4 or more stars rose from 10% to 14% and that of bed & breakfast establishments with 4 or more stars increased from 29% to 39%.

The changes made in 2009 to the classification scales for the other classes of establishments classified by the CITQ prevent us from making the same kind of comparison. Remember that before 2009 they were ranked on scales of 0 to 3 stars or 0 to 4 stars.

New class of establishment

In addition, following amendments to the *Act respecting tourist accommodation establishments*, which took effect in January 2011, the "other accommodation establishments" classification was introduced. This new classification covers establishments offering few or no hotel services and that do not belong to any of the other classifications defined in the Regulation. As of January 18, 2012, there were 14 establishments in this group.

Number of establishments rising and falling

As the above table shows, there has also been marked growth in the tourist homes class and a decline in a number of other classes. Note, however, that despite the drop in the number of hotel establishments, the number of units for rent in this class has remained relatively stable. In January 2004 there were nearly 73,400, as compared with nearly 73,900 in January 2012.

OFFICIAL CLASSIFICATION!

QUEBEC TOURIST ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS CLASSIFIED BY THE CITQ

CLASS	CLASSIFICATION LEVEL (suns for bed and breakfasts, stars for all other classes)									
	NC*	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total January 2012	Total January 2004	Variation
Hotel establishments	44	8	251	716	538	232	18	1,807	1,964	- 157
Bed and breakfasts	50	0	1	96	681	482	16	1,326	1,607	- 281
Tourist homes	173	0	49	289	1,249	600	9	2,369	1,361	+ 1,008
Resorts	0	0	8	37	110	70	3	228	259	- 31
Youth hostels	2	0	1	14	28	15	0	60	44	+ 16
Educational institutions	1	0	0	3	17	9	0	30	29	+ 1
Hospitality villages	2	0	0	1	5	3	0	11	13	- 2
Other accommodation establishments	4	0	3	7	0	0	0	14	--	+ 14**
Total								5,845	5,277	+ 568

Source: Tourisme Québec database, as at January 18, 2012

* Not yet classified ** Class created in 2011

UNCLEANLINESS TOPS CUSTOMERS' LIST OF COMPLAINTS

Any customer complaint received by the CITQ or any other organization is first handled by the Association québécoise de l'industrie touristique (AQIT), which is responsible for replying to the customer and sending the establishment in question a copy of the complaint and the response sent to the customer.

If any of the grounds for the complaint are related to classification criteria, the CITQ then writes to the operator to inform him that it will be paying particular attention to the criteria in question.

COMPLAINTS HANDLED BY THE CITQ IN 2011

Grounds for the complaint

Cleanliness and maintenance	54 mentions
Classification	21 mentions
Customer service	19 mentions
Misleading advertising	17 mentions
Safety and security	15 mentions
Food services (2) and Breakfast (11)	13 mentions
Services and commodities	11 mentions
Rates	9 mentions
Bedbugs and insects	6 mentions
Shared or non-enclosed bathrooms	1 mention

Classes of establishments concerned

Hotel establishments	46 complaints
Tourist homes	18 complaints
Bed & breakfasts	12 complaints
Resorts	2 complaints
Educational institutions	2 complaints
Youth hostels	1 complaint

Insurance

ADVERTORIAL

Where do your insurance premiums go?

Insurance companies do not have a very good public image. In fact, people often love to hate them. It is reassuring, however, to know that your insurance company is in good financial health, since its capital is used for paying claims when the risks for which insureds are covered against materialize. Just like banks, insurers are subject to very strict rules aimed at protecting their customers. It would be a tragedy if a major disaster involving many victims occurred, and the insurer were unable to pay its customers' claims. The following breakdown describes where the premiums paid to general insurance companies go.

Claims

In 2010, the claims ratio varied depending on the insurer, between 62% and 72%. For each dollar, then, the insurer paid out from 62 to 72 cents in claims.

Expenses

In that same year, the expense ratio varied from 25% to 32%. These expenses included the insurer's overhead and also the amount paid to the broker or agent. The more an insurer is involved in the business sector, the higher its expenses will be, mainly because of human resources costs.

The combination of these two sources of expenses, called the combined ratio, was 97.12% for 2010, leaving a slim profit margin of 2.88% for the entire industry in Canada. In 2009, the combined ratio was 99.05%.

These figures show that insurers have little room to manoeuvre when it comes to rates. So it is important to be cautious of cut-price offers. Given how difficult it is to drastically reduce costs, an insurer might be tempted to save on claims costs by reducing or limiting coverage so as to reduce its payouts. An independent broker has a variety of products, and remains by far the best advisor for your insurance needs.

Jean-François Trudel,
Vice-President, Operations
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Answers to your questions:

Is there a way to report people who are renting tourist accommodation but don't have a classification certificate?

Yes... Just contact Tourisme Québec and give the exact address of the establishment being rented without a classification certificate and, if possible, the name and address of the person operating it. You can send your message by e-mail, to etablissements.touristiques@tourisme.gouv.qc.ca, or by regular mail, to the Direction de l'accueil et de l'hébergement touristique, 900, boul. René-Lévesque Est, bureau 400, Quebec City, QC G1R 2B5.

Remember that Tourisme Québec, and not the CITQ, is responsible for enforcing the *Tourist Accommodation Establishments Act*.

Can a tourist accommodation establishment refuse to rent to someone with a guide dog trained by the MIRA Foundation?

No... The MIRA Foundation quotes from the Quebec *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which stipulates that "Every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, [...] a handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap. [...] No one may, through discrimination, inhibit the access of another to [...] a public place, such as a commercial establishment, hotel, [...], or his obtaining the goods and services available there."

For more details on this subject, visit www.mira.ca.



J.E. Looks at hotel classification

Visit www.citq.info/media and watch a very informative report that aired on the J.E. show, on the problems with the hotel classification system in some southern destinations where Quebecers like to vacation. The reliability of the classification system used in Quebec is mentioned in the report.



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