



PRESS RELEASE

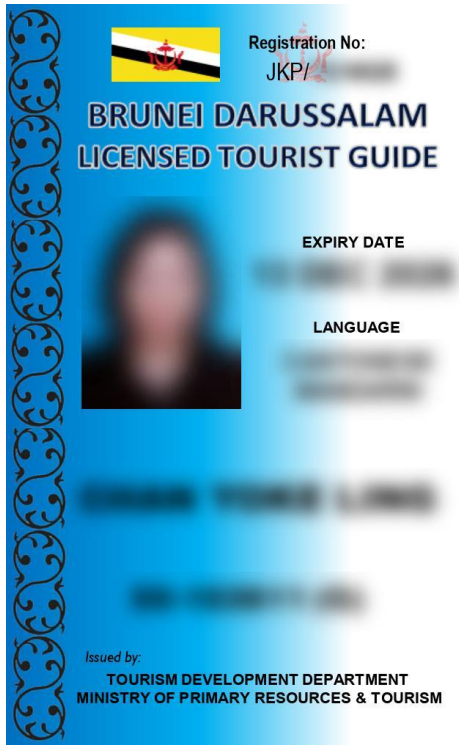
Illegal Tourist Guides

- 1. Bandar Seri Begawan, 24th December 2023** - As tourism arrival numbers slowly increase in Brunei Darussalam, the issue of illegal tour guides and unlicensed individuals using foreign transportation companies has surfaced as a pressing concern. With the country's increasing popularity as a travel destination, through social media, the presence of unauthorized guides poses a threat to the safety, satisfaction, and overall experience of tourists. The influx of tourists brings with it the need for knowledgeable and responsible guides who can ensure the safety and satisfaction of visitors. Illegal tour guides not only pose a threat to the integrity of the tourism industry but also raise questions about the quality of experiences provided to tourists. This problematic trend calls for a closer examination of regulations and a concerted effort to address the issue in order to safeguard the reputation of Brunei's tourism sector and ensure the well-being of its visitors.
2. The Tourism Development Department is intensifying its efforts to address the issue of illegal tourist guides operating within the country. In an effort to safeguard the integrity of the tourism industry in Brunei Darussalam and ensure visitors have an enriching and safe experience, the Department is urging all tourists and travel agencies to hire licensed tourist guides who possess in-depth knowledge, expertise, and an official license issued by the Tourism Development Department.
3. Illegal tourist guides not only undermine the professionalism and reputation of the tourism industry but can also compromise the information, visitor safety and satisfaction. These unlicensed individuals lack the required training, undergo no thorough background checks, and often lack the essential knowledge of Brunei's history, culture, and attractions that licensed guides possess.
4. The Tourism Development Department is committed to ensuring that all visitors to Brunei receive the highest standard of service and information. By hiring licensed tourist guides, tourists can be confident that they are in the hands of knowledgeable professionals who can enhance their experience, provide accurate information, and ensure their safety throughout their visit.
5. To identify licensed tourist guides, visitors are advised to look for Brunei licensed travel agencies who has licensed tourist guides with official identification badges issued by Tourism Development Department. These badges prominently display the guide's name, photograph, and Tourist Guides license number with expiry dates. Travel agencies and tour operators are

also encouraged to verify the authenticity of tourist guides by cross-checking their licenses with the department before engaging their services.

6. Tourism Development Department, in collaboration with relevant authorities, continuously conducts regular inspections and enforcement activities to identify and take action against illegal tourist guides. Violators will face legal consequences, including fines and potential imprisonment, as per Tourism Act, Chapter 239.

7. **Under Section 21, Tourism Act, Chapter 239: Any person who, directly or indirectly, employs, engages or otherwise uses the services of an unlicensed tourist guide –**
 - (a) whom the person knows or ought reasonably to know is an unlicensed tourist guide; or**
 - (b) with reckless disregard as to whether the tourist guide is an unlicensed tourist guide,****is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 and, in the case of a second or subsequent offence, to a fine not exceeding \$10,000.**



The official identification badge for Tourist Guides

