

## **HCCSO Tour Guidelines**



Firstly, the Horseless Carriage Club of Southern Ontario (HCCSO) would like to extend a big thank you for organizing a tour which may be in the form of a one-day garage tour, a weekend tour, or a multi-day week-long tour. The following information is meant to serve as a guideline. These tips have been contributed by our members who first toured with their parents and now their children and grandchildren are driving and touring. Contributions to this handbook have also come from recent members who bring a new perspective to touring.

### **Getting Started**

- Each tour will be unique in terms of destinations and activities. Pick a date for your tour.
- Ideally, it has been found that it's necessary to start organizing your tour a year ahead. With a 'limited good weather' touring season and a wide variety of other tours to choose from, choosing your tour dates well ahead gives you the best opportunity to secure the hotel, decide on the venues, and plan the driving routes.
- It is important to try not to compete with other well-established tours and events that are scheduled at approximately the same time each year.
- The HCCSO has a dedicated Tour Director who will be happy to assist you, and of course the entire HCCSO Executive is there to help.

### **Destinations and Stops**

- Choose the general area that you would like to tour. It may be close to your home and an area that you are familiar with or perhaps choose an area that you would like to learn more about.
- Make a list of potential destinations, museums, historic, or scenic areas of interest, car collections and car memorabilia. Activities that include

your spouse and children are always welcome. The HCCSO tours are not just for the drivers and their cars but also for the entire family.

- A visit to a retirement/long term care home or a school is always appreciated and is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy and share automotive history and fun stories.
- A popular activity is to arrange to take part in a local car show. It's a great opportunity to show off our cars and make new friends.
- Plan a route that tries to avoid congested roads. Back country paved roads are always preferred. An ideal day for touring is 60-80 miles a day (usually think of miles versus kilometers), although sometimes mileage may be longer to get to a must-see destination.
- Consider stopping along the route. Rest stops, side of the road stops, coffee or ice cream stops. Keep in mind gas stations, scenic views, and timing for lunches and venues.
- It's important as a tour host, to make new members feel welcome!

### **Selecting a Hotel**

- Ideally, the hotel should have enough rooms to accommodate the number of people. Hotels will usually block rooms off with a cut-off date closer to the tour. Try not to commit to filling a certain number of rooms ahead of time.
- Ask the group salesperson to show you a guest room, restaurant, banquet facilities and an area that could be used for a hospitality room, which can often be negotiated free of charge. A hospitality room is a great meeting place during the tour.
- Check the hotel policy for their food and refreshments policy, as some do not allow food to be brought in. Providing packaged snacks, soft drinks and bottled water is always appreciated.
- Arrange to have volunteers open the hospitality room possibly in the morning and after the end of the touring day. Tour route changes and

weather updates can be communicated through a message board in the hospitality room.

- If possible, negotiate a breakfast with the room rate explaining the financial benefit to having x number of rooms booked and guests staying for x number of days.
- Tour organizers may also financially support the host hotel by holding a banquet, lunch, or dinner during the tour if the hotel has the facilities to accommodate this. Add-ons can be a great negotiating tool.
- Recently tour organizers were able to negotiate a popular hotel by organizing a five-day summer tour with Sunday as the arrival day and departing Friday. This schedule doesn't interfere with wedding and weekend business.
- If the hotel has a pool, it is a welcome addition for families.

### **Parking at the Hotel**

- Ideally, it is important to have truck/trailer parking at the hotel, keeping in mind that the parking area should be large enough for participants who may have to leave early or need to unhook their tow-vehicle.
- Unfortunately, there are times when it is not possible to park at the hotel and it may be necessary to park off site. This situation requires special consideration around security. If this is the only option for parking trailers, keep in mind adequate lighting and 24-hour security staff, depending on the area.

### **Meals**

- A tour could be planned around group lunches and dinners, prepaid with the registration, or set up as a pay as you go event where participants pick their own lunch and dinner stops, or a little of both.
- It's always good to have at least a hospitality suite, or one meal where people can gather. Each tour area will dictate what food amenities are available.

- A service club, local church, or legion may be able to supply coffee, lunch or dinner and washroom facilities. Tour organizers have successfully worked with golf courses, churches, clubs and caterers to provide meals on touring days, including box lunches served at a local park.
- A group lunch/dinner is popular especially for large groups, as it gives opportunities for people to socialize. A pre-arranged meal at a group price which usually includes meal, soft drink/coffee, dessert, taxes and gratuities can be added to the cost of the tour. Usually, it's possible to negotiate a children's menu at a reduced price.
- It is helpful to list local restaurants in the tour book with their address/phone number/ postal code for those times that people are eating on their own.

### **Registration Form and Participation Cost**

- HCCSO has developed a registration form which will help ensure all drivers are licensed and insured. We encourage you to use this registration form and add your hotels and daily itinerary.
- Once you have laid out your tour and determined venue costs, hotel costs, and meal costs (if any) then it's time to set up a budget.
- Usually, the participant pays for their own hotel, at a pre-determined rate, but the tour host usually collects money for the meals, venues, activities, and hospitality. Determine how much each participant must pay to join the tour.
- It may be necessary to add an extra cost for the Driver if there are parking costs, ferry costs, or other costs that relate to the automobile.
- HCCSO has a special fund for youth (15 and under) that will help support youth on the tour and provide special activities. Please speak to the HCCSO Youth Coordinators for more information on this important initiative.

- HCCSO Tour Director or Treasurer can help you with the budget. A tour host will not be required to pick up any shortfall if they have established a well-laid-out budget ahead of time.
- If there is a significant surplus at the conclusion of the tour, monies will be returned to the participants.
- At the end of the tour, a short financial summary is filled in using a provided template and submitted to the club executive.

### **Tour Book**

- The tour book can be simply a handout with directions but should include the contact numbers of the tour organizers, police and closest hospitals, gas stations, washroom facilities, and maps if available.
- Club members have created many different formats for tour book directions. There is a sample tour route template on the website that can be downloaded and used.

### **Making Connections**

- Very helpful contacts are the local Chambers of Commerce and Tourism offices in the area. They provide a wealth of information with attractions, restaurants, events, and contacts in their area. They are an excellent source of maps, guidebooks, local magazines, and people. They may provide cloth or plastic tour bags, as well as bag fillers.
- Past tour organizers have brought copies of the HCCA Gazette, the Commutator Newsletter, banners and photographs of our cars to meetings with local officials and hotel managers. The HCCSO has club banners for your use.
- People are absolutely amazed that our 100+ year old cars are still on the road and understand the added value to having your tour in their area and at the hotel. Consider contacting the local newspaper and the local police for advice on your tour.

- There are sample tour route sheets and a sample registration form that you can download for your use.
- Also included is a sample budget for your tour. HCCSO kindly asks for tour organizers to submit a simple accounting sheet at the conclusion of the tour.
- Other resources are available, for example *Skip Carpenter & Don Rising's Tour Guidelines*, is an excellent multipage guide to organizing a tour. Contact the website for a copy.

On behalf of the Executive and members of HCCSO, we thank you again for volunteering to organize a tour, and we wish you and your team every success with your planning.

*'Yours in Brass Era Touring'*

HCCSO Executive and Members