

CLIA Introduces New 2009 Association Id Card Qualification Requirements

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2009 Applicants Required To Be Pursuing, Or Have Achieved CLIA Certification Status

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) has announced that travel agent qualifications for the official CLIA ID Card in 2009 will include enrollment in, or achievement of CLIA Cruise Counsellor Certification. This latest evolution of CLIA ID Card qualification requirements reflect the growing sales power of CLIA-affiliated agents across the entire spectrum of travel and tourism, as well as the association's obligation to the industry to ensure that its agents are both actively engaged in selling travel and are pursuing professional development in order to grow their businesses.

Since 2000, CLIA has provided agents with the option of acquiring an official CLIA ID Card that signifies their affinity to that agency and that agency's affiliation with CLIA. Active travel agency membership in CLIA and successfully completing a minimum of one annual CLIA live or online training seminar is a CLIA ID Card qualifying requirement. In 2009, the following requirements will be implemented:

The individual agent or agency management must be affiliated with an active CLIA travel agency holding 2009 membership.

ID Card applicants will be required to complete and pass the exam for at least one annual recurrent CLIA live training seminar or CLIA online training program not previously submitted prior to applying for their 2009 cards.

2009 ID Card applicants are required to be enrolled in, or to have achieved a designation (ACC, MCC, ECC, ECCS) in CLIA's Cruise Counsellor Certification Program. Attainment of an ACC designation requires a program of mandatory and elective training options as well personal cruise experience, shipboard inspections and 25 cabin sales within the two year enrollment period.

Effective with new CLIA Certification enrollments/re-enrollments occurring after 01/01/09, if ACC designation is not attained within the two year CLIA Certification enrollment period, CLIA ID Card privileges will be suspended for a minimum of one (1) year with reinstatement contingent upon achieving ACC, or Certification re-enrollment and the pursuit of CLIA Cruise Counsellor Certification.

In recognition of the owners and managers of CLIA member travel agencies who manage the agency business but are not necessarily front-line sellers of travel, each CLIA Travel Agency is entitled to a management allocation of no more than four CLIA ID Cards for which the above Certification qualification is not required although annual CLIA recurrent training is necessary.

'As the leisure selling power of the CLIA travel agent has grown, so has industry recognition of these agencies and agents beyond the cruise segment. Thousands of travel businesses including cruise lines, hotels, and attractions as well as tour operators and other ancillary travel services recognize and value the CLIA designation,' said Terry Dale, CLIA's president and CEO.

'CLIA has an obligation to provide member benefits including the option of obtaining a CLIA ID Card. We also have an obligation to provide member cruise lines and other industry partners assurance that our agent partners are actively engaged in the sale of travel and are committed to professional development. CLIA's training programs are frequently acknowledged as the best in the travel industry and we strongly believe that this evolution of ID card requirements is a win/win/win situation for the CLIA agent, for the traveling consumer and for industry suppliers who recognize the value of CLIA agents,' he continued.

CLIA's decision is supported by travel agents' own testimony as well as a recent consumer survey. Agents who achieve CLIA Certification claim that their annual sales productivity grew an astounding 261%. In addition, the 2008 CLIA Market Profile Study of American travelers found that 65% of the general population and 75% of cruise vacationers state that professional designations such as CLIA Certification is very or extremely important to them. And, 61% of the general population indicated that they would more likely use the services of a travel agent with a professional designation.

'CLIA Certification is proven to increase travel agent sales and enhances industry position and credibility. It also provides the traveling consumer a higher level of service and professionalism and demonstrates to the industry supplier that the CLIA agent is a dedicated professional. It makes perfect sense to enhance the value of the CLIA ID Card by making these new modifications,' Dale added.

About CLIA

The nonprofit Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) is North America's largest cruise industry organization. CLIA represents the interests of 24 member lines and participates in the regulatory and policy development process while supporting measures that foster a safe, secure and healthy cruise ship environment. CLIA is also engaged in travel agent training, research and marketing communications to promote the value and desirability of cruise vacations and counts as members 16,000 travel agencies. For more information on CLIA, the cruise industry, and CLIA-member cruise lines and travel agencies, visit www.cruising.org.

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