

"Sponsored travel" means travel on a commercial, non-commercial or private aircraft and includes any other travel-related expenses (e.g. taxi, accommodation) paid for in whole or in part by a third party. This Bulletin is designed to clarify the circumstances in which Members may appropriately accept such offers.

When can I accept an offer of sponsored travel?

Acceptable sponsored travel includes taking part in a genuine fact-finding tour, or speaking at conferences, public events, forums and the like, where Members' experience as elected officials would offer valuable perspectives. A genuine fact-finding tour or event is one which allows the Member to become better informed regarding subject matters closely related to their official duties. The Member's participation should serve a public purpose rather than a private one.

What are the disclosure requirements?

The *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* prohibits Members from accepting a gift given in connection with the performance of their duties of office, unless given as an "incident of protocol or social obligations" (section 7). Sponsored travel is considered a gift and therefore the same considerations for acceptability and disclosure apply as for other gifts. Before accepting an offer of sponsored travel, Members should consult with the Commissioner to ensure that it is appropriate to do so.

If the gift of sponsored travel is approved by the Commissioner, Members are required to submit a Statement of Gifts and Personal Benefits (Form 5), available on our website at <https://coibc.ca/disclosure-process/#Forms>. This Form should be submitted within 30 days of returning, when the full cost of the trip is known. This information will be included on the Member's next Public Disclosure Statement.

What factors are considered?

The following chart (overleaf) outlines the major factors the Commissioner takes into consideration when determining whether it is appropriate for a Member to accept sponsored travel.

The onus is on the Member to advise the Commissioner of the invitation and provide the required supporting documentation as far in advance as possible.

Factor	Supporting information required
<i>Who is the donor?</i>	Provide the name and some background information about the sponsor. Generally, invitations from a governmental, professional or a public interest body will more readily be approved than invitations from a corporate or commercial enterprise.
<i>Does the tour have an educational purpose?</i>	Provide a copy of the letter of invitation, brochures, etc., and any other information describing the purpose of the tour or event. The letter of invitation should indicate why the donor selected you to participate. Note if you have any specific duties (e.g. speech, presentation).
<i>Is the subject matter of the tour directly linked to Member's duties of Office?</i>	Describe how the subject matter of the tour or event relates to your legislative or caucus committee role, or a particular issue facing your constituency.
<i>What educational activities/opportunities are there?</i>	Provide a detailed agenda or schedule of events, including (as far as possible) the names of individuals or organizations with whom you will be meeting. NB: While some socializing and networking sessions are appropriate, most events and activities should provide a learning opportunity for the Member or a platform to promote British Columbia.
<i>How is the public interest served?</i>	Describe how you will use the information learned or relationships developed to benefit your constituents or the people of British Columbia upon your return. Note if there are any follow-up activities planned (e.g. report to committee, presentation in constituency).

If you have any questions, please contact our Office for more information. We can be reached by phone at (250) 356-0750 or by email at conflictofinterest@coibc.ca.