

OHTO's Packaging Program 2013-2014

The Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) offers members the opportunity to list vacation packages online, for free, at ontarioshighlands.ca. This website is the premiere destination for visitors in Ontario's Highlands. Packages are marketed here and where applicable, they may also be available for sale, offering consumers the option of booking their vacation online, in a secure, safe environment from the comfort of their own home.

Included in this kit are the following:

- Description of how the OHTO's Packaging Program works
- Options you have as a member to list your package
- Answers to your Frequently Asked Questions
- Tips to make your package more successful
- OHTO Packaging Form

We look forward to working with you to continue to develop and promote packaged experiences and welcome your feedback about the program at any time.

How the Program Works

Step 1 – Submit your completed package form to the OHTO

- 1) Complete an OHTO Packaging Form in one of the following ways:
 - a. Download a form at <http://ohto.ca/2011/09/online-packaging/>,
 - b. Directly from your OHTO membership account at ohto.ca
 - c. Complete the attached application
- 2) Indicate on your application form how you wish to use the OHTO's Packaging Program. Package listing options are as follows:

I want to market my package and:

 - Use the OHTO's booking system (my package does not include accommodations),
 - Be contacted directly to sell it, or
 - Use my own booking system to sell it.
- 3) Include a description and details about your package.
- 4) Submit your package to the OHTO by sending your completed Package Form to packaging@ohto.ca, or submitting it online.
- 5) Submit a signed copy of the *Package Terms & Conditions* document that applies to the package listing option you selected. The OHTO will send this to you when you submit a package.
- 6) Contact the OHTO if you have questions about the application process or the information you are required to provide with your package.

Step 2 – Your package is listed on OntariosHighlands.ca

When you submit a package, the OHTO will work with you to ensure the content is web ready and appealing to the target market. You will be provided a preview of your package before it is posted on the website however, as per the OHTO's *Packaging Program Terms & Conditions* agreement, the OHTO reserves the right to edit provided content and select imagery to ensure consumer appeal of packages. Timeframe between package submission and posting on the website typically varies between two weeks and one month, depending on the readiness of the content provided.

If you selected to use the OHTO's booking engine, you will have the ability to manage the package availability at any time by logging in to your OHTO member account at <http://ohto.ca>. Package availability does not apply for the other listing options. For any other changes to your listing after a package goes online, please contact the OHTO directly.

Step 3 – A customer wants to learn more or book your package

The next steps depend on which package listing option you selected to use.

A. If you opted to use the OHTO's Booking System:

1. The customer uses the calendar to check whether the package is available and can book the package directly through the OHTO's booking engine.
2. Once a customer books, the Package Lead receives an automatically-generated email notifying them of the booking with all relevant booking details including:
 - a. Customer contact information
 - b. Package details
 - c. Purchase price
3. The customer also receives an automatically-generated confirmation of their booking which includes: dates, package information, charges to their credit card for full package pre-payment, and cancellation policy.
4. The OHTO processes the customer payment and issues a cheque to the Package Lead for the sale price less a 3% credit card transaction fee within the bi-weekly billing period. The Package Lead distributes the applicable funds to the package partners.

B. If you opted to be contacted directly:

The customer will be prompted to contact the Customer Service Contact information you provide on your package submission form to obtain information about the package and book.

C. If you opted to use your own booking system:

The customer will be referred back to the booking engine at your own website to book directly through you.

Frequently Asked Questions about the OHTO's Booking System

What is the cost to list a package with the OHTO?

Listing your package with the OHTO is free.

Does the OHTO charge a fee if a customer books a package?

Yes. The OHTO charges a 3% transaction fee to help cover the cost of credit card processing.

How will I be paid for purchased packages, including frequency?

If using the OHTO's booking system, the OHTO will send the Package Lead a cheque for all packages sold less a 3% transaction fee to cover credit card processing charges within the bi-weekly billing period. It is the responsibility of the Package Lead to disburse funds to package partners.

Can I manage the dates a package is available once it has been listed online?

Yes, if you opted to use the OHTO's booking system. The Package Lead simply has to login to their member account at <http://ohto.ca/members> to make any changes to the dates the package is available. Availability is updated instantly in the system.

Can packages be booked last minute? Is there a restriction in place so that customers have to book a certain time in advance? I'm worried about double-booking.

The OHTO's booking system flags packages as unavailable 3 days prior to the requested date. This means that packages must be booked at least three days in advance to allow for inventory controls and avoid double-booking.

How will I be notified once a customer books a package?

The Package Lead will be sent an automatically generated email notifying them that the package has been booked. It is the responsibility of the package lead to notify package partners of the booking.

Can customers change their dates once booked?

The OHTO's booking policy states that:

No changes may be made within 24 hours of the original arrival date. Changes to packages are subject to the approval of the OHTO and to package availability.

Customers are directed to contact booking@ontarioshighlands.ca to modify their reservation.

What is the package cancellation policy for consumers?

The OHTO's cancellation policy states that:

All cancellations must be made directly through the OHTO and are subject to a \$25.00 cancellation fee. For cancellations received less than 24 hours prior to arrival date, no-shows and customers who depart early, the full price of the package will be charged.

Customers are directed to contact booking@ontarioshighlands.ca to cancel their reservation.

The complete Booking Policy is also at: <http://ontarioshighlands.ca/booking-policy/>.

Can I see my package before it goes online?

When you submit a package, the OHTO will work with you to ensure the content is web ready and appealing to the target market. You will be provided a preview of your package before it is posted on the website however, as per the OHTO's *Packaging Program Terms & Conditions* agreement, the OHTO reserves the right to edit provided content and select imagery to ensure consumer appeal of packages.

Can I submit a single-supplier package?

Yes, if you are a member from within the geographical boundaries of Ontario's Highlands.

Do I have to become an OHTO member to participate in a package?

The Package Lead must be an OHTO member from within the geographical boundaries of Ontario's Highlands.

Can I partner with a tourism business outside the OHTO region?

Yes. While the mandate of the OHTO is to increase tourism in the Ontario's Highlands region and we first and foremost encourage partnerships with other OHTO members, you can partner with tourism businesses outside the region. The Package Lead, however, must be an OHTO member from within the geographical boundaries of Ontario's Highlands. Please visit ohto.ca for a dynamic map of the region and contact the OHTO at admin@ohto.ca if you have questions about membership.

What is the \$150 defaulting penalty on the OHTO's *Booking System Terms & Conditions*?

This penalty applies to any package cancellation by the supplier due to factors other than those noted in the package details.

I want to offer customers the choice of accommodations or attractions with my package. Can I do that?

Not at this time. Currently our booking system requires that package components are firm, including package partners.

I only want to market my package on ontarioshighlands.ca. Can I do that?

Yes, absolutely. Simply select tell us how you would like customers to book the package on the Packaging Application Form.

Is a booked package transferable to another customer?

As per the booking policy, a booking is not transferable.

What if I have to cancel my package after a customer books? For example, if I can no longer offer my package because of bad weather.

Any probability for cancellation must be noted in the package details. If a supplier cancels a package for reasons other than those noted in the package details a \$150 cancellation penalty will apply.

Tips to make your package more successful:

- ✓ Add a link to your package on your website & social media sites.
- ✓ Promote your package using Google AdWords or Facebook Ads.
- ✓ Build a landing or internal page on your website, dedicated to the package. Once the date for the package has passed, eliminate this page or add a new package to showcase.
- ✓ Create a sense of urgency in marketing with phrases such as “limited space – book now!”
- ✓ Ask your current customers to pass the word along to family and friends.
- ✓ Make sure that those on the front line (front desk, reception, answering phones) know all of the package details in order to respond to any questions and to take bookings.
- ✓ Tell your local Visitor Information Centre or Chamber of Commerce about the package details so that they can let visitors know about it.
- ✓ Stay in close touch with package partners to compare notes on bookings, inquiries, and any operational or money matters. Package partners should re-group at regular intervals to share results, review progress and fine-tune operations and service delivery as required. Communication is really important for partnerships to succeed.
- ✓ Have a well-developed ‘Plan B’ for weather and other contingencies.
- ✓ Pay attention to customer comments and feedback and address any shortcomings in package delivery. Consider new possibilities for additional packages or modifications to your current package based on what your customers tell you.
- ✓ Communicate your experience with the online booking system to the OHTO, to ensure the booking system continues to meet the needs of members and customers.