

## **Update from Commission for Aviation Regulation on Travel Trade Licence Renewals**

The Commission for Aviation Regulation (CAR) today May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012 has announced the completion of the spring 2012 licensing round for travel trade renewals. In total, 101 out of 102 applicants have had their travel agents' licences renewed with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012. Seven new applicants were also granted licences making a grand total of 108 licences in this round.

One travel agent has not had their licence renewed, Apex Travel Consulting Ltd trading as GPS Travel based at 26 Eustace Street (off Dame Street) Dublin 2. The company must cease taking new bookings immediately. CAR advises that any future bookings with this or other unlicensed traders would not be protected by the bonding system operated by the CAR (see Notes to Editor below).

Commenting on the process, Alan Richardson, Manager of Licensing for CAR said, *"We are pleased that almost 98% of those seeking to renew their licence completed all of the requirements by the May deadline. One travel agent has failed to meet these requirements, and must cease taking new bookings immediately. We are advising intending passengers not to book with unlicensed traders as any such bookings will not be protected by the bonding scheme operated by the CAR. Existing customers of these agents may engage directly with them on their existing arrangements."*

All tour operators and travel agents are required by law to be licensed and bonded to buy or sell overseas travel originating in the State to destinations outside the State or Northern Ireland. This is to ensure passenger repatriation in the event that a travel agent or tour operator ceases trading when customers are abroad or to provide refunds where the agent or operator is unable to fulfil the consumers' contracts before the due date of travel. Any bookings made by members of the public with an unlicensed entity are not protected by the bonding scheme operated by CAR.

CAR has uploaded details in the licensing area of its website to advise the public and the trade of current licence holders. For a complete list of license holders please see [http://www.aviationreg.ie/Licence\\_holders/Default.154.html](http://www.aviationreg.ie/Licence_holders/Default.154.html)

**-- Ends -**

**For further information, please contact**

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## Note to Editors:

CAR commenced the current licensing process on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011 by issuing Commission Notice CN3 advising intending applicants that it would open its online licensing system from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012. The industry was also given deadlines for completion of certain stages of the application process and by which dates financial statements had to be lodged in order to avoid substantially higher levies for late submissions. The principal motive for CAR to extend the length of the licensing round was to allow additional time for applicants seeking to obtain bonds from bank or insurance companies.

1. Original timelines for completion of licences was as follows:

16 January 2012	Opening of on-line licensing application facility
13 February 2012	Deadline for receipt of application at standard fee
14 March 2012	Date the Commission aimed to issue "decision in principle" letters for applications received by 13 February 2012
16 April 2012	Deadline for receipt of bond to ensure issuance of licence by 1 May 2012

2. A licensing round was also undertaken in October 2011 leading to the total number licensed on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 at 286 for both tour operators and travel agents.
3. All renewing and newly licensed applicants used the online licensing system to renew their licenses in 2012.
4. Advisory note to passengers regarding travel agents not in possession of a travel trade licence: CAR advises customers of travel agents who are not in possession of a valid licence from the Commission that they should not transact any new bookings with such travel agents. They may pay outstanding balances of travel already booked prior to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Unlicensed travel agents are not permitted to make new travel arrangements for customers without a licence as there is no protection for customers.
5. Role of CAR: CAR was set up in February 2001 under the Aviation Regulation Act 2001 to carry out economic regulation relating to the passenger charges at Dublin Airport and the aviation terminal service charges imposed by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA). It also has responsibility for the licensing of commercial aircraft for entities registered in Ireland and for the approval of ground handlers at Dublin Airport. It has responsibility for the slot allocations for aircraft at Dublin Airport and for enforcing consumers' rights in the air passenger rights and persons with reduced mobility area. It also licences tour operators and travel agents under the Transport (Tour Operators and Travel Agents) Act 1982.

6. Travel agents not renewing their licence:

*J. Barter & Sons Ltd\**

*Equalia Ltd*

*Zara's Planet Ltd*

*Trikon Ltd*

*Twohig's Travel Ltd*

*Maureen Towey*

*Tony Heverin Travel Limited*

7. Travel agents newly licensed during this round:

*\*J. Barter International Ltd (taking over the business of J Barter & Sons Ltd)*

*Wings Abroad Holidays Ltd*

*Euro Disney Vacances SAS*

*Vliegwinkel Holding BV*

*Sunshine Cruise Holidays Ltd*

*Travel Advisors Ltd*