

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11445



Introduced by: Hon. Keith Micah "Atty. Mike" D.L. Tan

AN ACT

**PREVENTING, MITIGATING, AND RESPONDING TO RISKS AFFECTING CHILDREN
AND OTHER TOURISTS WHILE ON VACATION, ENGAGING IN LEISURE, OR
PARTICIPATING IN ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism is one of the most vital pillars of the Philippine economy, celebrating the country's natural beauty, vibrant culture, and warm hospitality. Every year, millions of Filipino families and international visitors travel across our provinces, beaches, resorts, and eco-tourism sites. However, behind the promise of leisure and family bonding lies a critical gap in our regulatory framework in the field of standardized, mandatory safety and emergency response protocols tailored to protect vulnerable tourists, particularly children.

This glaring vulnerability was brought to national attention by a heartbreaking tragedy in October 2023, when six-year-old Sandy Garovillas lost her life to a box jellyfish sting while on a family vacation at a beach resort in Palawan.¹ What should have been a manageable medical emergency turned fatal due to the complete absence of immediate first-aid supplies, trained emergency response personnel, and established medical evacuation protocols at the destination. Sandy's tragic passing exposed a systemic deficiency in how tourism establishments across the country prepare for and handle life-threatening emergencies.

This measure, popularly known as "Sandy's Act," seeks to institutionalize safety as an indispensable element of Philippine tourism by establishing clear, enforceable safety requirements across all accredited and non-accredited tourism establishments, water parks, recreational facilities, and transport hubs accommodating minors. To achieve this, the bill mandates the implementation of clear hazard mitigation plans and emergency evacuation protocols, while ensuring that establishments maintain age-appropriate medical supplies and essential emergency treatments, including life-saving countermeasures for marine stings, animal bites, and severe allergic reactions. Furthermore, it requires the presence of certified first-aid responders and trained lifeguards near recreational waters, while integrating these safety standards into the business permit and licensing processes of Local Government Units and the Department

¹ Mangaluz, J. (2025, March 6). *Her name was Sandy: Family's tragedy inspires bill for child tourist safety*. Philstar.com. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/06/2426354/her-name-was-sandy-family-s-tragedy-inspires-bill-child-tourist-safety>

of Tourism. The bill also incorporates protective protocols to safeguard children against safety hazards, neglect, and exploitation within tourism premises.

No family should ever lose a child to a preventable emergency while seeking joy and recreation in our country's tourist destinations. By passing this counterpart legislation, the House of Representatives aligns with the Senate in upholding the sacred duty of the State to protect the life, health, and well-being of all travelers, most especially our children.

In honor of Sandy Garovillas and in commitment to the safety of all Filipino families, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



Keith Micah "Atty. Mike" D.L. Tan
4th District, Quezon

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives in the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the "Child Tourist Safety Act" or "Sandy's Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure the safety of tourists, especially children, while on vacation, engaging in leisure, or participating in any other activities related to the tourism industry as part of the State's efforts to strengthen its tourism industry by securing the safety of all tourists, consistent with the Constitutional mandate to safeguard their right to assistance including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development. Toward this, there is also a need to study and determine the appropriate safety measures for children participating in the aforementioned activities.

SEC. 3. *Covered Tourism Establishments and Areas.* — This Act shall apply to all individuals, partnerships, cooperatives, corporations, or other legal entities operating tourism industry-related facilities, attractions, and accommodations, whether accredited or not, such as, but not limited to, hotels, resorts, water parks, and surfing camps, accepting minors as guests, customers, clients, or patrons. Tourism areas such as public beaches, natural parks, waterfalls, and other non-privately owned tourist sites fall under the responsibility of the applicable local government unit (LGU) concerned.

SEC. 4. *Emergency Planning & Risk Mitigation.* — To prevent and address the risks affecting tourists, especially children, while on vacation, Covered Establishments shall, in accordance with rules and regulations to be promulgated pursuant to this Act, develop and implement a Tourism Emergency & Risk Mitigation Plan, to ensure that minors and other visitors, guests or patrons are provided with adequate and age-appropriate access to medical, emergency, and other health care services, as well as protection from other risks such as those related to marine hazards, drownings, abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.

The Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Health (DOH), the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), shall jointly develop and maintain a Tourist Safety Risk Map identifying, mapping, and designating areas with hazards and threats to the safety of tourists, especially children, on an annual basis. The Tourist Safety Risk Map shall include data from community-based reporting mechanisms, peer-reviewed scientific studies, and other relevant data for up-to-date monitoring.

Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, DOH, DENR, CWC, and DILG, in consultation with other relevant civil society organizations, shall promulgate Tourism Emergency & Risk Mitigation Rules and Regulations based on the Tourist Safety Risk Map, covering the various levels and types of risk. These shall be cascaded to the LGUs by the DILG, and to accredited tourism industry-related facilities, attractions, and accommodations by the DOT, which shall develop and implement their respective Tourism Emergency & Risk Mitigation Policies.

The policies required shall include:

- (a) **Prevention Plan.** - A prevention plan addressing the risks affecting tourists that is age-appropriate which may include but not limited to accidents, drowning, animal bites, exploitation, trafficking, and other potential harms. The plan shall, where applicable, include the installation of appropriate warning signs, community education and awareness initiatives, and other preventive measures stipulated in the Tourist Safeguarding and Protection Rules and Regulations.
- (b) **Health and Safety Services.** - Provision of the services of health care professionals, either on-call or on full-time basis, depending on volume of operation and distance to the nearest medical facility, as well as necessary medical equipment and medicines identified by the DOH, and means of transport to the nearest hospital or medical facility. In addition, they shall ensure that there are, at all times, staff members on their premises with first aid training certified by accredited training institutions.
- (c) **Lifeguard Requirement.** - Covered Establishments and Areas operating swimming pools, or those in close proximity to beaches, lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water used for recreational activities, shall ensure that there are an adequate number of duly-certified lifeguards on duty at all times during opening hours.
- (d) **Emergency Response Plan.** - An Emergency Response Plan must be integrated with the municipal or city disaster response framework. This Emergency Response Plan shall be developed in coordination with the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (LDRRMO) to ensure that the establishment has a clear and active communication line to local emergency responders, ambulance services, and the nearest hospital or medical facility in the event of a mass casualty incident or severe medical emergency.

SEC. 5. *Permits and Accreditations.* — LGUs shall ensure that all Covered Tourism Establishments comply with the provisions of this Act prior to the issuance or renewal of any license, clearance, or permit required for their operation. LGUs shall conduct regular

inspections of Covered Tourism Establishments and Areas to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of this Act.

Non-compliant Tourism Establishments shall face suspensions imposed by the LGU following a graduated system based on gravity, frequency, and impact of the violation. For non-compliant areas managed by respective LGUs, administrative sanctions compliant with existing laws, rules, and regulations, shall be imposed by the DILG.

The DOT shall ensure that tourism industry-related establishments comply with the provisions of this Act prior to the grant or renewal of accreditation. The DOT shall conduct periodic inspections of accredited tourism-related establishments to ensure full compliance with this Act.

Non-compliant Covered Establishments shall face sanctions imposed by the DOT following a graduated system based on gravity, frequency, and impact of the violation. There shall be coordination and data sharing between the DILG and DOT regarding non-compliant tourism establishments for the other agency's appropriate action.

The DOT and the DILG shall establish and maintain accessible reporting mechanisms in their respective agencies for citizens to report violations of this Act.

SEC. 6. Capacity Building and Training Subsidy. — To ensure compliance with this Act without imposing undue financial burden on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the DOT, in coordination with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), DOH, DENR, and the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), Philippine Life Saving Society (PLS) shall establish a subsidized training program for tourism workers.

The program shall provide accessible and affordable certification courses on Basic Life Support (BLS), Standard First Aid, and Water Safety/Lifeguarding. The DOT shall allocate a portion of its training budget to subsidize the certification costs for employees of qualified MSME tourism establishments.

SEC. 7. Penal Clause. — Any person who violates any of the provisions of this Act or its Implementing Rules & Regulations shall, upon conviction by final judgment, be punished by imprisonment of not less than six (6) months nor more than two (2) years, or a fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand pesos (PhP100,000.00), nor more than Five Hundred Thousand pesos (PhP500,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court. If the violation is committed by a juridical person, the officer responsible therefor shall serve the imprisonment when imposed. If violation is committed by an alien, he or she shall be immediately deported after service of sentence, without need of further proceedings.

Negligence or failure to immediately provide first-aid to a minor who suffers physical injuries due to the use of a Covered Establishment's facilities, shall make the Covered Establishment liable for any hospital expenses incurred. In the event that these injuries result in death, a Covered Establishment shall also shoulder the burial expense of the deceased. If the death was due to non-compliance with this Act, the accreditation, permits or licenses of the Covered Establishment shall also be revoked in accordance with this Act's Implementing Rules & Regulations.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules & Regulations.* — The Department of Tourism, Council for the Welfare of Children, Department of Health, Philippine Coast Guard, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Interior and Local Government, in consultation with the Philippine Red Cross, Philippine Life Saving Society, and other civil society organizations and scientists, shall issue the Implementing Rules & Regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days from the effectivity thereof.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,