

MESSAGING GUIDANCE FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY

COVID-19 RECOVERY PHASE: BC RESTART PLAN, STEP 1

For May 26 until further notice (check back regularly for updates)

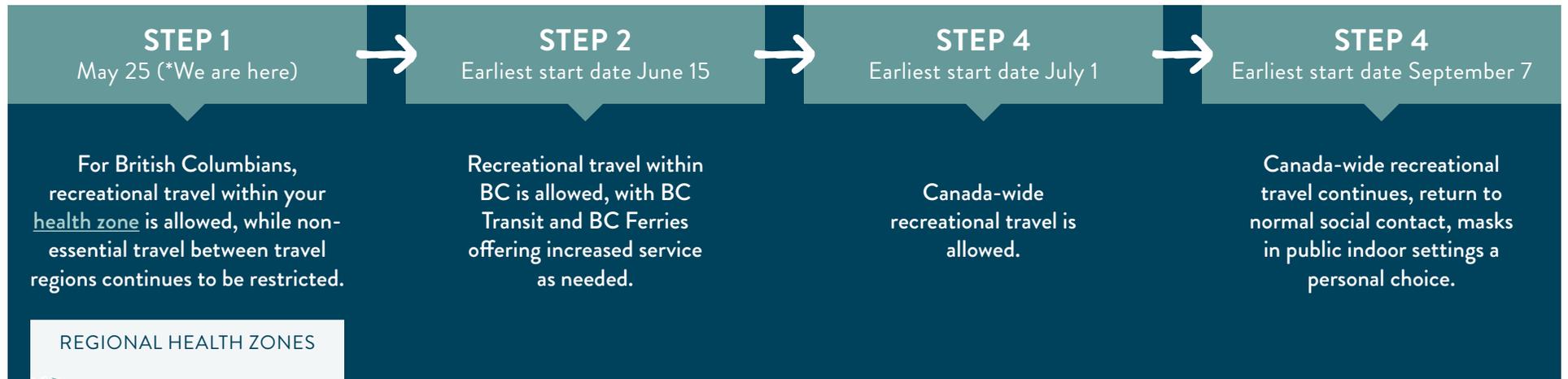


DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA

STATUS UPDATE

On May 25, the Province announced BC's Restart: a careful, four-step plan focused on protecting people and safely getting life back to normal. The plan lays out key benchmarks and target timelines for moving through each step.

KEY MILESTONES FOR TRAVEL



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This document includes suggested messaging for BC's tourism industry and FAQs for **STEP 1** of BC's Restart Plan

THIS IS FOR

Destination BC, Regional and Community/City Destination Marketing Organisations, Sector Associations, and Tourism Businesses.

STEP 1: COMMUNICATIONS FOCUS

Support BC's Provincial Health Orders and Recommendations, and BC's Tourism Industry by: Encouraging BC residents to explore locally (within their Regional Health Zone).

CHANNELS:

Organic Social Media
Consumer Website

PRIMARY MARKETS:

British Columbia

SUGGESTED KEY MESSAGING:

- It's time to #exploreBClocal
- As of May 25, travel within your regional health zone is encouraged
- Restrictions on travel outside of health zone boundaries remain in place
- Start planning your summer getaway now, for travel in Step 2 and beyond
- For information on BC's new Restart Plan, including health zone boundaries, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restart>

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

All:

- Share this messaging with your teams, networks, and partners.
- Encourage locals to explore their [health zone](#).
- Use the #exploreBClocal [social media graphics](#).
- Share the HelloBC "[Know Before You Go](#)" page.
- Update any "Know Before You Go" content on your website to reflect the latest restrictions.
- Connect your audience with official sources—the most accurate, up-to-date info on current Provincial Health Orders and recommendations can be found on the Government of BC's website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions>.

Businesses:

- Ensure your COVID-19 safety plans, required by [WorkSafe BC](#) are completed and posted publicly (at the business and on the website, if there is one), and shared proactively.
- Use the new feature in our listings program to add a direct link to your business' COVID-19 Safety Plan on your HelloBC.com listing, to help more visitors see it.
- Share your plan proactively across channels and with the media, to help rebuild consumer confidence and demonstrate all of the incredible efforts you've made to keep your guests and staff safe.

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What are the current rules regarding travel?

- The BC Government announced its [4-Step Restart Plan](#) on May 25. We are currently in Step 1, until midnight June 15*, at the earliest.
- [Leisure travel is now permitted](#) **within** your Regional Health Zone (as established on April 23). Non-essential travel **between** Regional Health Zones is still restricted. These measures apply to the entire province. This includes a continued pause on non-essential inter-provincial travel, as well.
- Highway signage will be updated to reflect that recreational travel within your Regional Health Zone is now allowed.
- Accommodations and attractions can continue to receive guests from within their Regional Health Zone only. Accommodations can receive guests from other regions if they are travelling for essential reasons (see examples below).
- * *The criteria for moving to Step 2 is at least 65% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with declining case counts and COVID-19 hospitalizations.*

What are the Regional Health Zones?

- The Regional Health Zones are:
 - Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley (Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health regions)
 - Vancouver Island (Island Health region)
 - Northern/Interior of B.C. (Interior Health and Northern Health regions)

How should businesses handle bookings/cancellations from residents outside of their Regional Health Zone, during Step 1?

- We are asking all businesses to ensure they are following the Provincial Health Orders/Recommendations and WorkSafeBC guidelines for safe operations.
- If we all continue to do our part, we should be able to move to [Step 2 of the Restart Plan](#) on June 15*, when province-wide travel will be allowed.
- Rebooking and refund policies are up to the individual business.
- While businesses will not be fined for accepting non-essential, out of Regional Health Zone visitors, members of the public who are found to be travelling for leisure purposes, outside of their Regional Health Zone could be fined \$575 for violation of a travel order, or \$230 for refusal to follow direction of an enforcement.
- If a business is concerned that individuals are not adhering to Provincial Health Orders, they can contact Public Health Inspectors, Bylaw Officers and the Police.
- * *The criteria for moving to Step 2 is at least 65% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with declining case counts and COVID-19 hospitalizations.*

Can BC residents go to indoor and outdoor tourism businesses/attractions, within their Regional Health Zone?

- Yes! BC residents are encouraged to visit tourism businesses (accommodations and attractions), within their Regional Health Zone during Step 1.

- Businesses can welcome customers as long as they have a current COVID-19 safety plan in place and all other PHO orders are followed.
- All businesses are encouraged to constantly review their COVID-19 safety plans. To learn more about WorkSafe BC's COVID-19 safety plans, check here: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/checklist/covid-19-safety-plan?lang=en>
- For businesses with a listing on HelloBC.com, please update your information to add your safety plan to your listing. You can log on to the portal, here: <https://destinationbc.force.com/s/>

What are the rules for dining?

- Restaurants, pubs, bars and food courts are now open for indoor dining, as well as patio and take-out service, with health and safety protocols in place (capacity limits based on physical distancing requirements, masks when not seated at a table, events prohibited.)
- [Indoor and outdoor dining for groups up to 6 people](#) (not restricted to your household or bubble).

When will province-wide leisure travel be allowed?

- The criteria for moving to Step 2 is at least 65% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with declining case counts and COVID-19 hospitalizations. If we reach these goals and keep transmission rates low, BC will move to [Step 2 of the Restart Plan](#), allowing for province-wide leisure travel, at midnight June 15, at the earliest.

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Can tourism operators accept bookings for after June 15 and beyond?

- Yes! People can accept travel bookings for Step 2 and beyond. However, we recommend implementing flexible booking policies where possible. The PHO needs to see an increase in vaccination rates, and declining COVID-19 case counts and hospitalisations before we can move to the next step.

How should tourism industry partners alter their marketing efforts?

- Promoting leisure travel within a Regional Health Zone is now allowed. Promoting leisure travel between Regional Health Zones before Step 2 (June 15) is not advised.
- Tourism partners should focus on the #ExploreBCLocal message and encourage British Columbians to support businesses within their Regional Health Zone, during Step 1.
- Messaging promoting travel **after June 15 and beyond** should be worded carefully to ensure there is no confusion for the public, and should be based on criteria in the Restart Plan.
- Partners can use this messaging guidance to help businesses, available here. <https://www.destinationbc.ca/covid-19/destination-bc-response/messaging-toolkit/>

What should we tell visitors from across Canada?

- Travel to BC, by residents of another province or territory, is still restricted to essential travel only until we reach [Step 3 of the Restart Plan](#) July 1 (at the earliest).

**See essential travel list below*

- The criteria for moving to Step 3 is at least 70% of BC's 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with declining case counts and COVID-19 hospitalizations.
- During Steps 1 and 2, people should only travel in and out of BC if absolutely necessary.
- Essential travel **does not include** visiting a private vacation property owned in BC. Travel for social or recreational reasons, to see family or friends for non-essential reasons or to visit a vacation property, is not currently allowed.
- If people must visit, for essential reasons, they must abide with all of BC's current public health orders and recommendations.
- Access points to BC will continue to be monitored. Those entering for non-essential reasons will be turned away.

What is essential travel?

Order provisions recognize certain reasonable exemptions for essential activities. These include:

- moving to a different principal residence or assisting a person to move for that purpose,
- carrying out a work-related purpose, including volunteer work,
- commercially transporting goods,
- receiving health care services or social services or assisting someone to receive those services,
- attending court,
- complying with a court order,

- exercising child-custody rights or spending parenting time with a minor child,
- accessing childcare,
- attending classes or receiving training at a post-secondary institution or school,
- responding to an emergency or a critical incident, including incidents that involve search and rescue operations,
- providing care or assistance to a person who requires care or assistance because of:
 - a psychological, behavioural or health condition, or
 - a physical, cognitive or mental impairment
- visiting by an essential visitor as provided in the guidance of the Ministry of Health set out in a document titled "Ministry of Health - Overview of Visitors in Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living" that was in effect on April 1, 2021,
- attending a funeral service,
- travelling under the authority of a variance of an order issued by the provincial health officer under the Public Health Act if the variance was made before this section comes into force,
- travelling by residents of the local health areas of Bella Coola Valley or Central Coast to Port Hardy to obtain essential goods and supplies,
- travelling by residents of the local health area of Hope to Chilliwack to obtain essential goods and supplies, and
- returning to one's own principal residence.

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How will Step 1 be enforced?

- Businesses are NOT being asked to enforce measures under Step 1.
- A comprehensive and integrated compliance and enforcement regime will continue.
 - The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will continue to update highway signage and signage on the borders;
 - BC Ferries will restrict recreational vehicle passage, deter non-essential bookings and limit sailings through Step 1;
 - BC Parks will restrict out-of-area bookings and refund bookings where necessary through Step 1; and
 - Police departments will support enforcement measures, including roadblocks not unlike the tactics used in the CounterAttack program. At the discretion of police, a contravention of the order may be subject to a \$575 fine.
 - Government may set up these roadblocks at places like BC Ferries or on Highway 1 leaving the Lower Mainland, as a way to discourage recreational travel through Step 1.
 - As with previous Orders, this new Order also includes \$230 fines for refusal to follow the direction of an enforcement officer or engaging in abusive or belligerent behavior.

What are the Step 1 rules for gatherings and events?

Events or gatherings organised by a business or sector must follow the rules laid out, here: [Organised Gatherings By Sector](#).

- **Outdoor personal gatherings:** Up to 10 people can gather outdoors. For example: Up to 10 people can gather at a park or beach. Up to 10 people can gather in the backyard of a residence
- Patios and outdoor areas at restaurants, pubs and bars are not included. Tables are restricted to 6 patrons.
- **Indoor personal gatherings:** Up to 5 visitors or 1 other household can visit a personal residence. For example: Up to 5 people from different households can attend a dinner party at a household of 4 people, or one household of 7 people can attend a birthday at another household of 4 people.

Can people visit their vacation home or cottage?

- Yes, if the property is located within their Regional Health Zone. Travel for leisure or recreational purposes outside their Regional Health Zone of their primary residence is prohibited through Step 1.

Can people book a vacation rental with another household in Steps 1 and 2?

- In the first two steps, the limits on guests at vacation rentals will be the same as in your home.
- Guests will be limited to five additional people (6 people), or one additional household.

Will there be occupancy limits on vacation rentals in Step 3 (i.e., for July and August)?

- No. Government expects to lift limits on occupancy at the start of Step 3—the beginning of July.

How is the Province dealing with AirBnB, VRBO and other private vacation rentals?

- Government continues to work with rental companies, local governments and other stakeholders to ensure the Restart Plan applies evenly to all businesses.

What are BC Ferries and BC Parks doing to support the Restart Steps?

BC Ferries

- BC Ferries will continue to monitor reservations for recreational vehicles until Step 2. Staff will also check passengers, as they arrive at the terminal, to ensure they are travelling for essential reasons only. Non-essential travelers will be asked to return to their community. Questions for BC Ferries can be sent to customer.relations@bcferries.com.
- As we move through the Restart Plan steps, restrictions are lifted and travel within the province increases, BC Ferries will adjust their sailings and capacity accordingly.
- BC Ferries is under the jurisdiction of Transport Canada with respect to safety protocols. Masks will continue to be required in indoor public settings until Step 3, which includes public transportation like ferries.

BC Parks

- Recreational travel, including camping, within your Regional Health Zone is permitted in Step 1. Campgrounds need to have COVID safety plans, and like with other personal gatherings, camping can be with up to 5 other people or one other household.

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- Gatherings in campgrounds will be expected to follow the same rules for outdoor and indoor gatherings in Step 1: (outdoor-10 people, indoor-5 people)
- We expect people will continue to consider their own personal risk and comfort levels as we re-open, just as we've done throughout the pandemic. We expect other people to be respectful of that.
- Questions about BC Parks can be directed to 1-888-BC Ferry (1-888-223-3779).

Are masks still required in all indoor spaces?

- As outlined in the [mask mandate order](#), masks are still required for everyone in public indoor settings. A face shield is not a substitute for a mask as it has an opening below the mouth. Masks in public indoor settings will become a recommendation in [Step 3](#) (July 1, at the earliest) and become a personal choice when we reach [Step 4](#) (September 7, at the earliest)

Will masks be required on modes of transportation for those who aren't vaccinated/once capacity restrictions are lifted?

- The Province will develop updated health and safety protocols in advance of restrictions being lifted. We expect masks will continue to be required in "indoor" public settings until we reach Step 3. This would include transportation.

When will the US Border reopen, when will international travel resume?

- US and international travel is the responsibility of the Federal government—they're responsible for all international borders.

Will international travelers have to provide proof they've been vaccinated? Will rapid tests be used at borders?

- The Province is working with provincial counterparts and the Federal government on what a pan-Canadian approach might look like, to issue COVID-19 health status credentials in the event they are required.
- BC is exploring how the [BC Services Card](#) and mobile card can be integrated into any proposed solution, similar to how the mobile card is integrated with other Federal services such as Canada Revenue Agency's My Account.
- The BC Services Card and mobile card are already trusted tools that allow British Columbians timely, secure access to government services.
- Any approach will be built in a way that protects the privacy of all British Columbians.

What if Indigenous, First Nations or other communities want to keep restrictions in place?

- It's important to respect the wishes of all communities and follow local guidelines when you travel.
- While some communities will be eager to welcome visitors to support their local economy, there are some rural and Indigenous communities that may be hesitant.

- We ask anyone who is looking to recreate, including hunting and fishing, to do their research before they leave home, respect the wishes of local communities and follow local travel advisories and guidance.
- Destination BC will continue to update [Know Before You Go information on HelloBC.com](#)

When will businesses be notified that we're going to the next step in the Restart Plan?

- If we all continue to do our part and follow the rules and guidelines that are in place, we should be able to move through the Steps and corresponding timelines, as laid out.
- In addition, Government will continue to engage with the tourism sector, Indigenous people, local governments, and other organizations on the Restart Plan as we progress through the summer.
- Health and Safety guidelines will be reviewed, updated and communicated accordingly.
- The PHO will continue to be in regular communication with the public, and Destination BC will update messaging accordingly.

Additional info can be found here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/restrictions>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/travel/current>