

MESSAGING GUIDANCE FOR BC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

HOW TO TRAVEL IN BC THIS WINTER



DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA®

UPDATED: December 17, 2021 *This document will be updated as new information is available. Please check regularly for updates.*

THIS IS FOR

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

The following document outlines key messaging and information, resources and FAQs for BC's tourism industry as it relates to travel to and within BC this Winter, including trip planning, transportation, health protocols and proof of vaccination requirements for various activities and businesses.



On December 9, 2021, the BC Government provided an update on highway closures, restrictions, and repairs following the significant damage caused by flooding and landslides in the province last month, and what people should expect for travel options this holiday season in BC.

The Coquihalla will reopen to essential traffic no later than the end of day on Monday, December 20. The Province will remove the essential travel designation for Highway 3 approximately 24 hours later. When the Coquihalla reopens, the section of Highway 99 that's been restricted between Pemberton and Lillooet will also reopen to general travel.



NEW: New public health measures will also be in place from December 20 – 11:59pm on January 31, 2022. These include:

- limiting indoor, personal gatherings, including in rental and vacation properties to the household/residents plus 10 individuals, or one additional household maximum if all are aged 12 and older are fully vaccinated;
- requiring the BC Vaccine Card for organized events of all sizes and ensuring the QR code is scanned at events;
- seating requirements and restricting movement between tables at food and liquor-serving premises, and reinforcing the need to wear masks when not seated;
- limiting venues of 1,000 individuals or more to 50% of the seated capacity with reinforced masking requirements and scanning of the BC Vaccine Card QR code;
- pausing all sports tournaments while the order is in effect; and
- all New Year's Eve organized gatherings and events will be restricted to being seated-only events, with no mingling or dancing allowed.

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Winter Travel Messaging

Know Before You Go: Visitors will need to know what rules, recommendations and expectations are in place in BC to keep them, our residents, and our businesses safe, as they travel BC this winter. Refer people to Destination BC's [Know Before You Go page](#) for the latest information; update any info on your site to reflect the latest recommendations. We've created a new suite of winter travel infographics for you to share on your social channels, downloadable here: [Dropbox](#)



UPDATE—Further details:

- **Highway 7:** Essential travel restrictions on Highway 7 were lifted in early December.
- **Coquihalla Highway:** Based on the exceptional progress to-date, the Coquihalla will reopen to essential traffic no later than the end of December 20. An exact date will be determined over the coming days.
- **Highway 3:** Once the Coquihalla reopens to essential traffic, about 24 hours later, Highway 3 will reopen to regular passenger vehicles for recreational travel.
- **Highway 1:** Highway 1 through the Fraser Canyon is on track for a mid-January reopening.
- **Highway 99:** When the Coquihalla reopens to essential traffic, the section of Highway 99 between Pemberton and Lillooet will also be open to general/recreational travel, so long as the vehicle is not larger than a cube truck. This will occur sooner than Highway 3, as commercial vehicles are not on this route.

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Suggested Key Messages:

- British Columbia is a very large and diverse province. If one area is impacted by an emergency/closure/health event, or is already fully booked, there will be many other areas that are not directly impacted, have space, and are open for business.
- Due to recent storm activity, some roads are currently closed.
 - If your route is not currently accessible, or you are not an experienced winter driver, we encourage you to consider flying to your destination. Many airlines have added extra or new routes, and are working hard to help you travel in BC this winter.
 - As of December 15, it is expected that the non-essential travel restrictions on Highway 3 will be lifted no later than December 21, 2021.
 - While increased mobility is good news, people are advised to use extreme caution on Highway 3. Highway 3 is a mountainous route with steep grades and winding curves, and weather and road conditions can change quickly. It is a safe route, so long as people are prepared, responsible, and drive to the conditions.
- People who are not experienced with winter driving in the mountains are encouraged to use alternatives for travel between the Lower Mainland and Interior, such as regular bus service including along the Coquihalla.
- There are options for bus transportation from the Lower Mainland to Kelowna and Kamloops through companies like [Ebus](#), [Rider Express](#) and [Mountain Man Mike Bus Service](#).
- If you're travelling in BC, please check the latest, on-the-ground information before and during your trip to make informed travel decisions.
- Familiarize yourself with the protocols and visitor expectations in the places and businesses you wish to visit. Currently, all indoor businesses require you to wear a mask. Please respect the wishes, orders and restrictions of the communities/businesses you visit.
- Know Before You Go, and consult official information resources such as [Drive BC](#), local [Visitor Centres](#) and more, all available on [ExploreBC.com/travelupdates](#).
- Remember to be prepared before you travel. Ensure you have winter tires or chains, put an emergency kit in your vehicle, bring water and food in case of a delay, and let your contacts know your plans before you leave and when you arrive. It's the right thing to do every winter, not just this year.
- If you're enjoying outdoor recreation this winter, be sure to do so responsibly. [AdventureSmart.ca](#) will be your best friend when it comes to outdoor safety in BC.
- To help you navigate the temporary closures of certain highways, Destination BC has created a list of routes to help you move safely around the province [this winter](#).
- The tourism sector and communities across the province are eager to welcome you this winter, and we thank you for taking extra time to plan and prepare before you travel.

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How to Travel in BC this Winter

Destination BC has launched a new marketing campaign to help residents and visitors navigate highway travel restrictions, updated proof of vaccination requirements, winter driving and more, so they can travel safely and responsibly around BC this winter. Tourism partners can use the following messaging to align their efforts with the campaign.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

Additional Resources for BC's Tourism Industry to Share with Visitors and Employees

- **Plan Ahead!** For information on the latest travel updates, including visitor behaviour expectations, driving routes, BC Ferries, BC Parks and outdoor activities, visit: <https://www.hellobc.com/know-before-you-go>
- **We're in this together.** Let's make sure we travel responsibly and respectfully, and the experience is enjoyable for all. We've created a new suite of winter travel infographics for you to share on your social channels, downloadable here: [Dropbox](#)
- **Where to go for local insight and expertise.** If guests are looking for new places to visit or new attractions, there are more than 100 community-owned Visitor Centres and booths across the province that make up BC's Visitor Services Network, visit: <https://www.hellobc.com/plan-your-trip/visitor-information-services/>
- **Be safe in the backcountry.** Share the Backcountry Lodges of BC Association's planning resource page, here: <https://backcountrylodgesofbc.com/backcountry-101-2/know-before-you-go/>
- **Be AdventureSmart.** Remember the three Ts— Trip planning, Training, and Taking the essentials— and apply them to all your outdoor adventures. [AdventureSmart.ca](#) will be your best friend when it comes to outdoor safety for all seasons in BC. While you're out on the mountain or exploring the outdoors, remember to wear or carry suitable clothing, know your limits, and always carry the required safety equipment.
- **Shift into Winter.** Visit [ShiftintoWinter.ca](#) to access resources and tips on how to stay safe on the road this winter.

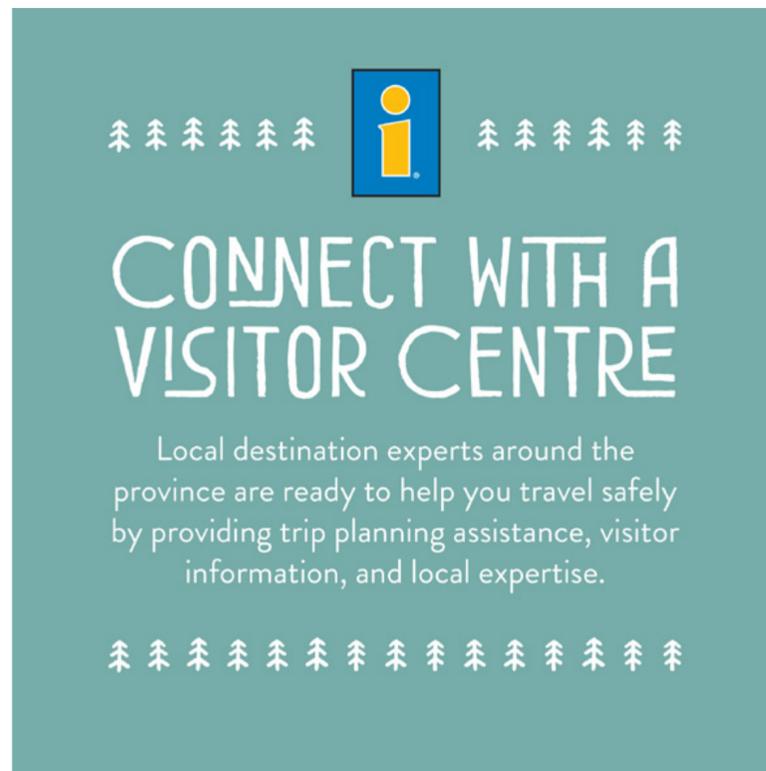
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Teal graphic with a central information icon (a blue square with a white 'i') and a row of stylized white evergreen trees above and below it. The text reads:

CONNECT WITH A VISITOR CENTRE

Local destination experts around the province are ready to help you travel safely by providing trip planning assistance, visitor information, and local expertise.

Marketing Messaging:

- Winter travel can be a great way to connect with family and friends, experience British Columbia, and help support small, family-owned businesses.
- Each of British Columbia's tourism regions—Northern BC, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, Kootenay Rockies, Thompson Okanagan, Vancouver Island, and Vancouver, Coast & Mountains—are ready to welcome visitors and those connecting with family and friends.
- Wherever you're headed this winter in BC, plan ahead so you can travel safely and responsibly and experience the best of what the season has to offer.

Suggested Hashtag:

#EXPLOREBC

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New Testing Requirements for All Travellers Flying into Canada

Incoming air travellers from all countries, except the United States, are required to take COVID-19 tests at the airport when they land in Canada.

The Government of Canada is increasing the number of fully vaccinated travellers being selected for testing to reach 100% of vaccinated travellers in the coming weeks.

- The tests will be required of all travellers, regardless of their vaccination status, and will also apply to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.
- Those who are vaccinated will have to isolate until they test negative. Unvaccinated travelers must isolate for 14 days, and test on day one and day eight of their quarantine.
- So long as the travellers have a safe place to isolate, they do not have to spend their isolation in a government quarantine hotel.
- There is no cost for the airport test for the traveller.
- For those arriving at YVR, [please read here](#) for more information.
- For those arriving at other international airports in BC, [please read here](#) for more information.

****Note:** the federal government continues to review & revise entry requirements, and may prohibit entry from certain countries in response to COVID-19.*

For the latest information on travel to Canada, including the updated federal requirements and restrictions, please visit the Government of Canada website.

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ENTRY INFORMATION:

Fully vaccinated foreign nationals who are eligible to enter Canada for discretionary (non-essential) reasons, such as tourism, must:

- **Be fully vaccinated:** a traveler must have received, and show proof of, the full series of a vaccine — or combination of vaccines — [accepted by the Government of Canada](#) **at least 14 days** prior to entering Canada. Currently, those vaccines are manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD, Janssen (Johnson & Johnson), Sinopharm, Sinovac, and COVAXIN
- Have a valid [pre-arrival COVID-19 molecular test](#) result taken no more than 72 hours before their scheduled flight or their arrival at the land border crossing, or proof of a previous positive test result taken between 14 and 180 days before departure to Canada. **Antigen tests, often called “rapid tests” are not accepted;**
- Be asymptomatic;

- Submit their mandatory information via [ArriveCAN](#) (App or website), including proof of vaccination in English or French and a quarantine plan; and
- Be admissible under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.
- Those arriving by air must also take a PCR test at the airport when they land in Canada, and isolate until they get a negative result. Airports are working with testing providers (ex. LifeLabs at YVR), who will administer the test.



If you have additional questions which are not answered on the website, please reach out to the Public Health Agency of Canada team at: cheryl.smith@hc-sc.gc.ca.

Fully vaccinated travellers arriving from an international destination to YVR can think of preparing for their journey into Canada through YVR in three simple steps:

1. Use ArriveCAN to provide pre-departure COVID testing and vaccination information as well as a quarantine plan.
2. Pre-register for arrivals testing; information about COVID-19 testing at YVR is available here. *Visitors are encouraged to pre-register, to help mitigate wait times on arrival: <https://www.yvr.ca/en/passengers/travel-planning/takecare/covid-19-testing>
3. Follow the directions of the Canada Border Service Agents and Public Health representatives.

For detailed information, including the steps you should follow before your trip, please visit the [Government of Canada website](#).

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Proof of Vaccination for Air and Rail Travel within Canada

All travellers over the age of 12 boarding a plane or passenger train within Canada must be fully vaccinated and able to show approved proof of vaccination.

PRIMARY MARKETS:

- International
- Canada

SUGGESTED KEY MESSAGING:

- All travellers over the age of 12 boarding a plane or passenger train within Canada must be fully vaccinated and able to show approved proof of vaccination.
- Effective immediately with a rolling scale-up of operations, incoming air travellers from all countries except the United States will be required to take COVID-19 tests at the airport when they land when arriving in Canada, regardless of vaccination status.
- We encourage all travellers to be fully informed of the pre-entry and on arrival public health and testing requirements. This includes the mandatory use of the [ArriveCAN app for those arriving from another country](#).
- For the latest information on travel to Canada, including the updated federal requirements and restrictions, please visit the [Government of Canada website](#).
- Travelers are encouraged to reference BC's "[Know Before You Go](#)" page for information on the latest travel restrictions, what's open and more.
- Proof of vaccination is required at many BC businesses. Please be prepared to show your ArriveCAN record and ID upon arrival.

BC Meetings & Events Industry – PHO Distinction for Business Events

In early December 2021, a distinction was made for business events in the latest provincial health order.

*Note: any updates to event definitions and requirements will be posted with other PHO orders here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

KEY POINTS:

- Business Events are allowed to have standing events. Networking, receptions, mingling are all acceptable. Holiday parties associated with businesses are considered “business events”.
- Events such as wedding receptions, funerals, theatrical and musical events, concerts must be seated.
- The health order separates the meaning of inside events into A & B categories:

A. “inside event” means (a) a gathering of more than 50 participants in an inside place for one of the following purposes: (i) a form of entertainment involving a performance such as a theatrical production, a concert, a symphony performance, a choral performance, any other type or musical performance or a dance performance; (ii) business, but limited to a lecture or presentation; (iii) a wedding reception; (iv) a funeral reception not held at a funeral home, (v) a sponsored or ticketed party at which there is musical entertainment, other than for the purpose of providing background sound;

B. a gathering of more than 50 participants in an inside place for one of the following purposes (i) a business purpose not described in (a), and including a conference, convention, commercial trade fair or workshop or home show; (ii) gambling; (iii) recreational education or classes, including arts, crafts, music, photography, culture, or travel education or classes (c) a gathering of any number of participants in an inside place for the purpose of an adult sports activity, an adult exercise or fitness activity or

class, or an adult dance class; (d) a sports event in an inside place; (e) a program for children or youth in an inside place; (f) a worship service in an inside place.

This indicates that only events in category “A” must be seated events. Category “B” events are legally able to be standing events.

A person must not permit a place to be used for or must not organize an inside event with a purpose described in paragraph (a) (Category A) of the definition of an “inside event” unless the event is held as a seated inside event.

A person must not permit a place to be used for or must not organize an inside event as a standing event, if the purpose of the event is described in paragraph (a) (Category A) of the definition of “inside event”

A note on dancing: There is still no dancing allowed unless it is a performance.

Read the full order of restrictions [here](#).

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UPDATED: Proof of Vaccination Requirements in BC

As of October 24, BC requires proof of full vaccination for people 12 and older to access some events, services, and businesses. The requirement is in place until January 31, 2022, and could be extended.

From December 20, 2021 until January 31, 2022, the BC Vaccine Card, and ensuring the QR code is scanned, will be required for organized events of all sizes.

During this time, there will be seating requirements and movement restrictions between tables at food and liquor-serving premises. Masks will continue to be required when not seated.

Venues of 1,000 individuals or more will be limited to 50% of the seated capacity.

The infographic is divided into two main sections. The first section, 'What is accepted as Proof of Vaccination', lists three methods: 1. 'ABC immunization record' (Accepted only until Sept 26, 2021), 2. 'The BC Vaccine Card' (Save it to your phone, print it, or get a paper copy in the mail), and 3. 'An outside-of-BC immunization record' (Accepted if you are visiting BC). A note at the bottom states 'Everyone aged 19+ must show government-issued photo ID with their proof of vaccination'. The second section, 'Where you will need proof of vaccination', lists various venues: Restaurants, pubs, bars & lounges (indoor & outdoor dining); Organized indoor events with 50+ people; Discretionary organized indoor group recreational activities; Indoor concerts, theatre, dance, symphony events; Fitness centres, gyms, adult sports (indoor); Indoor group exercise activities; Night clubs, casinos, movie theatres; and Indoor ticketed sporting events.

Places proof of vaccination is required for entry:

- Indoor ticketed sporting events
- Indoor concerts, theatre, dance and symphony events
- Licensed restaurants and restaurants that offer table service (indoor and patio dining)
- Pubs, bars and lounges (indoor and patio dining)
- Nightclubs, casinos and movie theatres
- Gyms, exercise facilities/studios, pools and recreation facilities
- Businesses offering indoor group exercise
- Indoor adult group and team sports for people 22 years old or older
- Indoor organized events with 50 or more people. For example: Wedding receptions, organized parties, conferences and workshops
- Indoor organized group recreational classes and activities like pottery, art and choir
- Post-secondary on-campus student housing

Places that don't require proof of vaccination:

- Grocery stores, liquor stores and pharmacies
- Unlicensed restaurants that don't offer table service, like fast food, coffee shops and takeout
- Salons, hairdressers, barbers
- Hotels, resorts, cabins and campsites
- **Does not apply to licensed restaurants or settings and events hosted at the accommodation. (Proof is required for these spaces, aside from the accommodation portion.)**
- Banks and credit unions
- Retail and clothing stores
- Food banks and shelters
- Escape rooms, laser tag, indoor paint ball, arcades and bowling alleys (if they are unlicensed or don't offer table service)
- Post-secondary on-campus cafeterias

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HOW IT WORKS

For BC residents:

- Visit gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard to download or print a copy of your BC Vaccine Card which contains a digital QR code.
- If you aren't able to access the digital BC Vaccine card:
- Ask a trusted friend, family member or support person to print your card for you.
- Visit a Service BC centre.
- Call 1-833-838-2323 to get a copy of your Card mailed to you.
- Have your card ready when entering a business. They will either scan your QR code or visually verify your BC Vaccine Card, and also check your ID.

For out-of-province visitors:

- People who aren't from BC must follow the same requirements and provide proof of vaccination and ID.
- Official Federal/Provincial/Territorial vaccine record
- Valid government photo ID

For international visitors:

International visitors must show:

- Proof of vaccination they used to enter Canada (all international visitors entering Canada will have used ArriveCAN)
- Passport

PROOF OF VACCINATION INFORMATION FOR BUSINESSES:

You have two options to verify proof of vaccination.

- **Visual confirmation:** a business or event looks at the customer's vaccine card, and confirms the name matches with their government issued ID, or
- **QR Code:** the business or event scans the QR code located on the customer's vaccine card (digital or paper), and confirms the name matches with their government issued ID.

The most secure option is using the BC Vaccine Card Verifier app. You don't need to check ID for youth aged 12 to 18.

To learn more about how to verify proof of vaccination, how to use the app, and sample of vaccine records from other provinces, please visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof/businesses>

Provincial Government Industry Resources:

- [Resident and consumer information](#)
- [Information for businesses](#) including how to verify proof of vaccination for BC and out-of-province residents, links to download the BC Vaccine Card Verifier app, print-ready posters and more.
- [BC Vaccine Card – A Guide for Businesses](#)

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Industry Resources

KEY LINKS:

- [NEW: Public Health Agency of Canada Entry Information Infographic](#)
- [Find out if you can enter Canada - Travel restrictions in Canada](#)
- [ArriveCAN](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccinated travelers entering Canada](#)
- [Entering Canada by land and air during COVID-19](#)
- [Entering Canada by water during COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19: For unvaccinated children under 12 without symptoms and travelling with fully vaccinated parents or guardians](#)
- [COVID-19: For travelers over 12 without symptoms who are medically exempt from receiving a vaccination](#)
- [@GovCanHealth](#)