

Business after Reopening: A Look at the Post-Closure Traveller

Question & Answer Follow-up | May 12, 2020

The following questions were raised during the May 12 webinar. We have removed any identifiable remarks and duplication of questions. Questions have been categorized for ease of use. Please continue to visit Destination BC's [COVID-19](#) page for up-to-date information and frequently asked questions.

REOPENING

[BC's Restart Plan](#) provides guidance on steps to safely reopen the economy to ensure our combined efforts and sacrifices are not squandered. Please review the plan for information on the four-phased approach and guidance on re-opening your business.

How do you see the coach industry returning to business from a social distancing point of view?

We know many of you have questions about safe operating plans and guidelines. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (TAC) has been working with TIABC, go2HR, Canada's West Ski Areas Association, the BC Hotel Association, the Adventure Tourism Coalition, and Indigenous Tourism BC on the restart guidelines for the tourism sector.

Sector organizations have been asked to develop guidelines to safely restart. TAC will work with WorkSafeBC to get the sector plans approved.

Once a sector plan is approved, then individual businesses will be expected to develop their own business operation plans that follow the approved sector guidelines. Please work with your sector association. In the meantime businesses may review material provided by [WorkSafeBC](#) and adapt them into appropriate COVID-19 safe plans for your workplace. [Here](#) is a good place to start.

Are businesses required to submit reopening plans to Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture for approval?

No, individual businesses do not need to submit reopening plans to the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture. Once a sector plan is approved, individual businesses will be expected to develop their own business operation plans that follow the approved sector guidelines. Please work with your sector association. [WorkSafeBC's website](#), which is being updated regularly, provides guidance to employers on returning to safe operations. While there is a lot of great information there, here is something [to get you started](#).

WorkSafeBC will have the jurisdiction to ensure businesses have a COVID Safe Plan in place, that it meets sectoral standards, and that it is being followed. This will include inspection of worksites across the province.

Will public washrooms and campground washrooms be opened in order to facilitate visitors?

[Provincial highway rest areas](#) are open and maintenance contractors are systematically monitoring them to ensure they are clean, sanitary, and well stocked daily.

On May 14, BC Parks will start to reopen the majority of provincial parks, protected areas, and marine parks. This includes opening washroom facilities and picnic areas. You can learn more [here](#).

Any feedback on willingness/desire to travel to places with swimming pools, hot tubs, hot springs, saunas, spas?

We have no specific data on the use of these facilities from a visitor perspective however, the [COVID-19 Guidance to the Hotel Sector](#) notes that these facilities were ordered closed by the Provincial Health Officer on March 21, 2020 and is recommended that they remain closed (as of May 11, 2020 Update, Page 10). It is unclear if this guidance applies to outdoor hot springs. Businesses operating these outdoor facilities should refer to WorkSafeBC.

What timeframes do you see to go beyond day tours?

Assuming there are no COVID-19 case increases after Phases 1 & 2, Phase 3 of BC's Restart Plan allows for the re-opening of hotels. With the provision of accommodations, visitors may begin to spend nights in destination and extend their trips beyond day trips. Phase 3 is anticipated to begin in June.

Will businesses require waivers for COVID-19? Especially outdoor related travel tour operators?

Businesses should obtain legal advice on the requirement and/or use of waivers as they relate to COVID-19.

In the days ahead, how do we balance the message of hotels opening and "travel close to home". It appears the government is leaving it up to us and therefore leaves it open to locals to interpret, thereby possibly making it less welcoming to visitors.

Assuming there are no COVID-19 case increases after Phases 1 & 2, Phase 3 of BC's Restart Plan allows for the re-opening of hotels. Phase 3 is anticipated to begin in June. [Messaging Guidance](#) is provided weekly by Destination BC to reflect the current state and can be used by DMOs, Sector Organizations, and businesses.

Guidelines must be set on HOW the suppliers (restaurants, bars, shops etc.) are going to be able to operate. In more rural areas it's not going to be easy to have plexiglass separations, not easy to attract staff back at the drop of a hat. The plans must be set long before the doors are opened.

Sector organizations have been asked to develop guidelines to safely restart. TAC will work with WorkSafeBC to get the sector plans approved. In cases where the PHO ordered a business closed, such as restaurants and pubs, TAC will also include a review from public health officials.

Businesses may review material provided by [WorkSafeBC](#) and adapt them into appropriate COVID-19 safe plans for your workplace. Businesses do not have to wait for their sector organizations to develop sector-level safe re-opening plans. [Here](#) is a good place to start.

What is the protocol to the turnaround with next check in - I feel to be safe/germ free environment?

The [COVID-19 Guidance to the Hotel Sector](#) provides interim guidance to those in the lodging sector.

What is some cleaning equipment that can be used to ensure the health and safety of guests?

The [COVID-19 Guidance to the Hotel Sector](#) provides interim guidance to those in the lodging sector.

Is there an accreditation program for accommodation cleanliness during COVID?

Currently, there is no accreditation program. go2HR, as the Health and Safety Association for BC's tourism and hospitality industry, is working with WorkSafeBC and other partners, to develop guidelines and tools for employers. Visit go2HR's website for up to date templates, tools, and information designed to support employers.

Is there any information relating to outdoor events? We have seen 50 people max but wondering if that is based on a certain size property or ability to social distance. City parks that host a small summer music series are wondering if they can host more than 50 people if they provide two separate seating areas (seats are social distances).

Gatherings of 50 people are permitted in Phase 2 of BC's Restart Plan. Dr. Henry's guidance (May 13) noted that 50 people is the maximum number permitted and only if the venue can accommodate safe distancing and that provisions are in place for safe contacts. Smaller venues host less than the 50 permitted if distancing guidelines cannot be met.

Do you think people will prefer to stay in Airbnb vs hotels?

Travellers are most concerned about their safety and ability to stay infection free. Those operating in the accommodation sector can reassure their guests by developing a clear plan for employee and guest safety and sharing that plan in both offline and online channels with your guests.

Any thoughts on cultural institutions - museums & galleries?

Museums and art galleries may open under Phase 2 of BC's Restart Plan.

These institutions will have to review material provided by [WorkSafeBC](#) and adapt them into appropriate COVID-19 safe plans for your workplace. Individual institution-level plans do not need to be approved by WorkSafeBC but, in some cases, sector organizations are developing sector-level plans that can be approved by the Public Health Office. Sector level plans, approved in this manner, can then be implemented by institutions within that sector. Institutions, however, do not have to wait for their sector organizations to develop sector-level safe re-opening plans. [Here](#) is a good place to start.

Understanding the added challenge of an island destination, I am wondering if there is any data about traveller sentiment to come to Vancouver Island?

Vancouver Island has a unique challenge in that it requires mass transportation for visitor access. Destination BC is conducting a number of studies to track resident sentiment for travel and behaviour and intent to travel to specific regions of the province (in partnership with Destination Canada). Insights from this research will be shared with industry partners for planning purposes and on Destination BC's corporate communication channels. In the short term, the best evidence will be volume on BC Ferries and flights to Vancouver Island.

We live in a small-town BC near Alberta boarder. We expect interest from small groups and wedding questions for less than 50 persons. Following all COVID-19 guidelines when we should be giving a reasonable timeline for this from today.

As part of [BC's Restart Plan](#) announced May 6, gatherings or events larger than 50 people continue to be prohibited until further notice. This includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings and other similar events. While provincial and federal governments are asking people to stay home and only go out when essential, if an event or gathering with less than 50 people is proceeding, it is mandatory that the physical distancing measures set out by our Provincial Health Officer be enforced.

The ban includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings and other similar events.

For further information on gatherings under 50, refer to [Public Health Agency of Canada's Risk Considerations](#) when deciding whether to postpone or cancel your event.

The Government of British Columbia announced BC's Restart Plan, which outlines the next steps to move BC through the pandemic. Right now, people are still being asked to avoid all non-essential travel to and around BC. You can read more about the plan [here](#). And, for provincial borders and restrictions, you can find that information [here](#).

CUSTOMER FOCUSED

How do guests from other countries know we are open for business?

Destination BC, in collaboration with Destination Canada, maintains partnerships with tour operators who sell BC internationally and domestically. We update them on BC's tourism industry on an ongoing basis to support them when the time is right to welcome visitors to BC.

Should we focus on and engage repeat guests?

Repeat guests are always a great source of visitation. As long as your promotional plans match the phasing set out in BC's Restart Plan, focusing on local and then BC residents first, this is a good strategy for re-igniting tourism in your region.

Will people be more likely to travel as a family, couples, friends, or solo?

Research suggests that people will want to find opportunities to reconnect with their family and friends. Summer travel may reflect families travelling with children, while fall travel may reflect couples with no children. An important piece will be for businesses **address consumer concerns** by highlighting appropriate experiences, targeting key travellers (younger, adventurers, passions-based travellers and families) and focusing on travel close to home.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Who was the research sample? BC residents, people who travel frequently, demographic?

Destination BC is currently undertaking primary research to better understand BC residents' perceptions of welcoming travellers into their community from various areas (outside of their community, other parts of BC, other provinces, the US and other countries).

Destination BC is also partnering with Destination Canada to better understand consumers intentions to travel. This research will include domestic consumers, as well as consumers from the US and other countries. Six waves of research will be conducted between June and April, next year.

Research from this webinar was gathered from a variety of secondary sources, all of which are cited in the webinar.

I'm interested in the Market Profiles, where can I find them?

You can find Market Profiles for BC on Destination BC's Research and Insights website, [here](#). Please note that these profiles are based on information of each market prior to COVID-19.

Do we have the ratio in dollar? International vs Canada?

In 2019, Domestic visitation accounted for 74% of BC's total visitation, and 55% of BC's total expenditures. You can find more information on the economic value of BC's tourism industry in the Value of Tourism report, published on Destination BC's Research and Insights website, located [here](#).

It's also necessary to understand the market by activity type. Fly fishing relies 75% on USA market and is in dire state without that market this summer.

Destination BC has a number of sector-related profiles located on the Research and Insights portion of the website, [here](#). Further information may be available through individual sector organizations.

I am curious to know how you measured the percentage of international visitors in the BC Tourism industry in 2019? What are you looking at to define this percentage?

Destination BC tracks both international visitor arrivals and international visitors. Each are derived from different sources. International visitor arrivals, also known as Customs Entries, captures all visitors who go through customs in BC and stays in Canada for at least one night. International visitation captures visitors who go through customs in BC and stay in BC for at least one night, and it also captures visitors who enter customs at any point across Canada and make their way for a trip of at least one night in British Columbia. Destination BC's International Visitor Arrivals publication can be found [here](#), along with more information on sources and calculations. International visitation by market can be found in the Market Profiles publications, [here](#) or the Value of Tourism publication, posted on Destination BC's Research and Insights portion of the website, [here](#).

Will certain age groups be more likely to plan travel in BC?

Destination BC does not yet have the results of consumer research. However, there are a number of supplier-led research that do examine the comfort level of travel of various age groups as a result of COVID-19 which are available online.

What shifts do you see within your EQ travel profiles - is it still a focus on the same profiles but perhaps with different focus or is there an opportunity to pull in a few other EQ travel profiles?

Destination BC's focus remains on the same EQ segment – Learners, however consideration to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on each EQ segment is ongoing.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

How can communities balance the goal of re-opening businesses for tourism while addressing resident concerns regarding tourists coming to their community?

We understand that the needs of each community will be different. At Destination BC, we are monitoring community sentiment in our regular conversations with CDMOs and RDMOs across BC. We know that a community's ability and desire to welcome visitors will vary at any given stage throughout the province, and we will continue to work with our partners on the ground to ensure that our work reflects that.

How will DMO's reassure locals that hosting tourists is safe for the community?

Tourism is an important economic generator to communities (especially the rural communities), and recovery plans will take into consideration the guidelines from Health, as well as destination capacity and willingness to welcome guests, working with community and regional DMOs to support these efforts and help to mitigate any anti-tourism sentiments. We understand that the needs of each community will be different. At Destination BC, we are monitoring community sentiment in our regular conversations with CDMOs and RDMOs across BC. We know that a community's ability and desire to welcome visitors will vary at any given stage throughout the province, and we will continue to work with our partners on the ground to ensure that our work reflects that.

VISITOR CENTRES

Is there a re-open plan available for visitor centres? Once you have the guidelines will all Visitor Centre get copies?

It is up to the individual community whether to re-open their Community Visitor Centre, and it is their responsibility to do so in accordance with the direction and requirements set by the Provincial Health Officer. To support Visitor Centres through this process, Destination BC is working with Government on a set of Guidelines for the Reopening of Community Visitor Centres during the COVID-19 Pandemic and,

once approved, all Visitor Centres will receive it. In the interim, we recommend visitor centres and their sponsor organizations begin to develop their re-opening plans and consider referencing the following sources: [BC's Restart Plan](#) , [Go Forward Management Strategy](#) , [WorkSafeBC Returning to Safe Operation](#), [WorkSafeBC Preventing Exposure to COVID-19](#), [Go2HR – COVID-19 What You Need To Know](#). We also encourage Visitor Centres to share best practices and innovative ideas regarding operational situations such as brochure distribution through the [Network Engagement Portal](#), or contact the Destination BC Visitor Services team at communityvisitorcentres@destinationbc.ca.

WEBINAR RELATED QUESTIONS

When get the link will we be allowed to share the webinar to all our stakeholders, members and local political leaders?

Yes, the link to this and all webinars in the series can be found [here](#).