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Toolkit Contents

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

This toolkit has a number of sections designed to help tourism operators navigate the current travel restrictions in place in British Columbia. It includes:

- Key Messages
- Excerpts from the tourism sector's joint statement with Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
- Recommended Actions for Operators
- Questions and Answers

The provincial government restrictions are available online at www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel.

The news release announcing the restrictions and exemptions is available news.gov.bc.ca/24287



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Key Messages

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

- We can see the light at the end of the tunnel as more people are vaccinated, but we aren't there yet. Giving up welcoming those from outside your regional zone, means we can help reduce the burden on health care workers, and welcome travellers in the near future.
- If you don't have to travel now, please don't. We want to welcome you when restrictions are lifted and we can all be safe together.
- We encourage you to stay local and support local. If you can, explore attractions and activities close to home and within your regional zone, to help bring some much-needed revenue to local tourism operators.
- The past year has been incredibly difficult for everyone. Like you, we want all travel to return as soon as possible – and today's restrictions will help us reach that point sooner.
- We know there are a lot of questions. The B.C. government has information on travel restrictions, a map of regional zones, as well as a list of reasons for essential travel, at www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel.



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Excerpts – Joint Statement with Minister

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

- “As the number of people with COVID-19 in B.C. continues to rise, we are asking British Columbians to not travel outside their local communities in order to help stop further spread of the virus.”
- “While the tourism and hospitality sector has done an amazing job implementing rigorous health and safety plans to keep their staff and visitors safe, COVID-19 takes every opportunity to spread. Unnecessary travel is too risky right now.”
- “The many people and businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry in B.C. need each of us to follow the rules without exception. Their livelihood depends on us all doing our part now so some travel can safely resume this summer and set these businesses on the road to recovery.”
- “Let’s support local businesses today by ordering take out, eating with our immediate household on a patio, picking up a coffee and enjoying it at a local park, visiting a local attraction or booking a ‘staycation’ at a local hotel. Now is not the time to travel for leisure and risk spreading COVID-19.”
- “We are at a pivotal moment in our province and we must act now to protect the health care system. We must stay local now so we can get back travelling across our beautiful province and once again welcoming visitors.”

From joint statement of Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport; Brenda Baptiste, Chair, Indigenous Tourism BC; Walt Judas, CEO, Tourism Industry Association of BC; Ingrid Jarrett, President and CEO of the BC Hotel Association; and Richard Porges, Interim President and CEO of Destination BC. Entire statement is online at news.gov.bc.ca/24289.



Recommended Actions for Operators I

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

- Consider contacting people from outside your regional zone who have a booking before May 25 and remind them that travel restrictions are in place.
- Include the following key message on your website, guest email distributions, and ensure this message is displayed at check-in:
“We want to welcome you as soon as we can. Due to travel restrictions in B.C. effective April 23, 2021, people are not allowed to travel outside of their regional zone until May 25, 2021. To learn more about British Columbia’s travel restrictions, essential travel inclusions, and identify which health area you currently reside in visit www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel.
- Add this question to your booking process and to your check-in COVID-19 questionnaire:
“Travel outside of one’s regional zone is restricted to a list of essential reasons on the B.C. government website. Are you aware of these restrictions?”
- Consider hosting training to ensure appropriate employees like booking, sales, reservation, and front-desk staff are aware of the public health orders and the limitations on travel until May 25.
- Confirm that any new bookings from now until May 25 meet current guidelines and orders.



Recommended Actions for Operators 2

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

- Businesses are not expected to enforce restrictions, they have a key role in informing the travelling public and making people aware, especially before they make their reservations.
- Pause any paid travel marketing.
- Encourage local residents to support local businesses or explore their own community, safely. If you want, you can refer them to Destination BC's local guides at www.hellobc.com/whats-open-in-bc and www.hellobc.com/bc-support-local-dining-guides.
- Help spread the message through your social media using #WeAreAllConnected; #StayLocalSupportLocal #BCTourismCounts; #SaveOurSummer. You can use the key messages, the joint statement excerpts, links the joint statement (www.news.gov.bc.ca/24289) and travel orders (www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel). Feel free to use DBC's social media graphics at www.dropbox.com/sh/xqbygsdgz92joga/AACCqbgJzfvpxdQk0_32IW3pa?dl=0
- Update any *Know Before You Go* content on your website to reflect the latest restrictions. That information is at www.hellobc.com/know-before-you-go or on the government website at www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel.
- Have a map of the regional zones and a list of essential travel reasons available at check-in. You can find them here www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel.



Questions and Answers I

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

What travel is restricted?

- The Emergency Program Act orders issued April 23 restricted people from non-essential travel between three regional zones based on B.C.'s health authorities
 - Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley (Fraser Health and Coastal Health regions)
 - Vancouver Island (Island Health region)
 - Northern/Interior of B.C. (Interior Health and Northern Health region – plus Hope, the Bella Coola Valley, and the Central Coast)
- There are no restrictions for travel inside these regional zones, though people are encouraged to stay in their own communities over the next five weeks.
- The restrictions, maps of the regional zones, and a list of exactly what is considered essential travel, are all available online at www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel.
- The restrictions are in place until May 25, 2021, though they could be extended if COVID-19 rates remain high.

Am I required to cancel or deny bookings for people from outside the identified health area until May 25? Am I responsible for enforcing the orders?

- Businesses are not responsible for enforcing the travel restrictions and compliance. However, it is our job to educate people, ask them screening questions, and encourage them to make travel plans for after the restrictions are lifted.
- We strongly recommend asking people to rebook for a future a date. The provincial government is asking us to review bookings from outside your regional zone and work to reschedule or cancel.
- We are asking people not to travel now so we can travel more freely in the future.



Questions and Answers 2

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

How will the order be enforced?

- Enforcement is the responsibility of the provincial government.
- There will be random police road checks, similar to impaired driving checks, to identify non-compliant travellers.
- While random road checks could be anywhere, they are most likely on highways leading in and out of regional zones, and at ferry terminals. Law enforcement officials will ask drivers where they are coming from, their destination, and why they are travelling.
- BC Parks will cancel and refund all reservations for non-locals, and will turn away non-essential travellers. Questions about BC Parks can be directed to 1-800-689-9025.
- BC Ferries is discouraging non-essential travel by limiting RVs and trailers. Questions for BC Ferries can be sent to customer.relations@bcferries.com.

What should I say if I'm asked by someone if their plans or activities are allowed?

- Saying yes is at the heart of everything we do in the tourism sector – which makes these orders so difficult for us.
- While it is the responsibility of tourism operators to educate and share the content of the emergency program orders, it is not our responsibility to interpret or enforce the orders or assess someone's travel plans.
- Anyone seeking clarification of what is or is not allowed should be directed to the orders, which are online at www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel.



Questions and Answers 3

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

What is considered essential travel?

- The public safety order restricting travel lists a number of exceptions to travel restrictions, which includes:
 - 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,
 - exercising child-custody rights or spending parenting time with a minor child,
 - attending a funeral service
- The full list of exceptions to travel restrictions can be found at www.gov.bc.ca/covidtravel.

Are there any new restrictions on types of activities or where they can be done?

- At this time, there are no changes to existing health orders to physically distance and wear a mask inside.
- B.C. residents can still go to local businesses (accommodations and attractions), within their own regional zone, with their immediate household members or their bubble of 1-2 people.
- Businesses with a current COVID-19 safety plan in place can welcome local customers (members of the same household or smaller bubbles of 1-2 people only), from their own community.
- People can participate in the same activities as before as long as they follow current health orders like physical distancing, staying inside your bubble, and mask requirements. However, the activities must take place within their own regional zone.



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Questions and Answers 4

April 23-May 25 Travel Restrictions

How do tourism operators handle refunds for cancellations?

- We strongly recommend asking people to rebook for a future a date.
- B.C.'s consumer protection laws remain the same and entitle eligible consumers to obtain a refund.
- If travel plans were cancelled by the business, consumers who booked online or over the phone have the right to cancel their contract and request a refund for the services they never received.
- If consumers made their online purchase by credit card, they are entitled to a refund in the same way that they paid. It is their choice whether to accept a voucher or credit.
- More information is available at <https://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca/questions-about-travel-plans-and-covid-19/>.

Are there financial supports to help tourism operators while these restrictions are in place?

- The province's Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant is still available, and impacted businesses should apply.
- All of our organizations are working with the provincial government to identify potential additional supports.