

MESSAGING GUIDANCE FOR BC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

COVID-19 RECOVERY PHASE: BC RESTART PLAN, STEP 2

For June 15 until further notice (check back regularly for updates)



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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 2 of BC's Restart Plan

THIS IS FOR:

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

RESTART STEP 2: COMMUNICATIONS FOCUS

Encourage BC residents to travel now and travel responsibly.

CHANNELS:

Paid, owned, earned

PRIMARY MARKETS:

British Columbia

SUGGESTED KEY MESSAGING:

- BC has now entered Step 2 of BC's Restart Plan; travel throughout the province is now encouraged.
- It's time to #exploreBCnow.
- Book your summer getaway now (at [exploreBC.com](https://www.exploreBC.com))
- Travel safely and responsibly this summer (see [page 4](#) for resources)
- For those outside of British Columbia - we look forward to welcoming you soon

HASHTAGS:

- #exploreBCnow
- #exploreBC

SUGGESTED CONTENT THEMES:

- **10 Ultimate BC Experiences:** Align your content with the [10 Experiences highlighted in the provincial campaign](#) (and share related content with GlobalContent@DestinationBC.ca)
- **Know Before You Go:** 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; share content from businesses that demonstrates steps being taken to ensure guests' safety; show imagery that aligns with health requirements and recommendations (i.e. no large crowds, masks where required)
- **Responsible Travel:** create or re-share content that educates travellers on responsible travel behaviour in your area; amplify content from Destination BC, [BC AdventureSmart](#), [Wildsafe BC](#), [Boating BC Association](#), etc. (see [page 4](#) for resources)
- **National Indigenous History Month:** highlight Indigenous tourism experiences in your area; amplify content from [@IndigenousTourismBC](#)
- **Pride Month:** highlight ways to celebrate Pride in your area; amplify content from your local Pride organization
- **Local Advocacy:** as visitors from elsewhere in BC begin to return to your area, highlight their stories on social media; highlight stories from locals to connect visitors with friendly local faces

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

All:

- Share this messaging with your teams, networks, and partners
- Share Destination BC's [Know Before You Go page](#)
- Update any “Know Before You Go” content on your website to reflect the latest restrictions
- Connect your audiences 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:

HelloBC.com Listings

- Update your business listing in [Destination BC's tourism business portal](#) to ensure your open/closed status is accurate; add a link to your COVID-19 safety plan

HelloBC.com Travel Deals

- Add up to three travel offers for British Columbians via [Destination BC's tourism business portal](#); offers surface across HelloBC.com and in paid advertising

Google My Business Listings

- Ensure your Google My Business Listing is up to date – find out more on [DestinationBC.ca](#)

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KNOW BEFORE YOU GO - RESOURCES

Plan Ahead! For information on what's open across BC, 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 infographics for you to share on your social channels, downloadable here: [Dropbox](#)

Where to go for local insight and expertise. If you're 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/>

Need the latest info from the PHO? Check out the Province's Travel and COVID-19 page, [here](#).

Be safe in the backcountry. Check-out Backcountry Lodges of BC Association's [Self-Guided Recommendations](#) and their planning resource page, [here](#).

Be a Good Boater. Boating BC offers a variety of resources on boating etiquette, green boating, protecting our marine mammals, and safe boating. Check them out, [here](#).

Catch-up on the Camper's Code. The British Columbia Lodging and Campgrounds Association has created a great resource for camping etiquette, here: [Coming soon!](#)

OPERATIONAL SAFETY FOR VISITORS AND EMPLOYEES

Review and share your COVID-19 safety plans Check-out WorkSafe BC's resources, [here](#).

Update your business listing on HelloBC.com Add your safety plan to your listing, and tell potential visitors what you are doing to keep everyone safe. You can log on to the portal, [here](#).

BSAFE is a new online health and safety training program designed to ensure foundational health and safety knowledge in BC's tourism and hospitality businesses to keep everyone safe as we move through the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more, [here](#).

FAQ: BC RESTART PLAN

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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 now in Step 2, until midnight July 1* at the earliest.
 - [Province-wide travel is now encouraged!](#)
 - Non-essential travel between provinces is still on pause.
 - Highway signage will be updated to reflect that recreational travel within British Columbia is now allowed.
 - Accommodations and attractions can receive guests from across BC. Accommodations can receive guests from other provinces if they are travelling for essential reasons (see examples below).
- * *The criteria for moving to Step 3 is at least 70% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with low case counts and declining COVID-19 hospitalizations.*

Can BC residents now go to indoor and outdoor tourism businesses/attractions across the province?

- Yes! BC residents are encouraged to get out and #exploreBCNow!
- 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](#)
- 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](#).

How should tourism industry partners alter their marketing efforts?

- Promoting leisure travel within British Columbia is encouraged!
- Tourism partners should focus on the #ExploreBCNow message and encourage British Columbians to explore their province this summer and beyond.
- Messaging promoting travel *after July 1 and beyond, to Canadians*, 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](#).

What should we tell visitors from across Canada, and how should businesses handle bookings/cancellations from residents outside of BC during Step 2?

- 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 Step 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.
- 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 3 of the Restart Plan](#) on July 1*, when Canada-wide travel will be allowed.
- Rebooking and refund policies are up to the individual business.
- 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 3 is at least 70% of the 18+ population vaccinated with dose 1, along with low case counts and declining COVID-19 hospitalizations.*

When will Canada-wide leisure travel be allowed?

- The criteria for moving to Step 3 is at least 70% 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 3 of the Restart Plan](#), allowing for province-wide leisure travel, at midnight July 1, at the earliest.

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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](#).

Can tourism operators accept bookings for after July 1 and beyond?

- Yes! People can accept travel bookings for Step 3 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.

What is 'essential travel'?

The BC Government recognizes 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.

What are the Step 2 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 50 people can gather outdoors for birthday parties, backyard BBQs, block parties etc. 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.
- **Indoor organised gatherings:** Indoor seated organized gatherings up to 50 people with a COVID-19 Safety Plan. Consultation with the sector begins for next steps on indoor and outdoor organized gatherings.

Can people visit their vacation home or cottage?

- Yes, British Columbians can travel across the province to visit a vacation home.
- Travel for leisure or recreational purposes by residents outside of BC (another province is their primary residence) is prohibited until Step 3.

Are there any changes to the safety protocols in Step 2?

- No. The same safety protocols remain in place as in Step 1.
- This includes sufficient space to allow for distancing, no more than six guests per table at restaurants, ensuring hand sanitation, collecting contact information for all guests.

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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 (6), masks when not seated at a table, events prohibited.)
- Liquor can be served until midnight
- Banquet Halls can operate with limited capacity and a COVID-19 Safety Plan
- [Indoor and outdoor dining for groups up to 6 people](#) (not restricted to your household or bubble)

When will restaurants go back to full capacity?

- As long as the indicators continue to look good and public health indicates it's safe to do so, restaurants can return to normal capacity at Step 3.
- The earliest that would happen is July 1.

For Step 3, what are the capacity limits for things like fairs and festivals and organized gatherings? When will they be available so organizers can plan?

- The PHO will provide guidance regarding capacity for fairs and festivals soon.
- Organizers are able to begin planning for fairs and festivals in Step 3 and Step 4.

Can people book a vacation rental with another household in Step 2?

- 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, August and beyond)?

- 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 offer increased service once Step 2 begins. Questions for BC Ferries can be sent to customer.relations@bcferries.com
- 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 BC is encouraged in Step 2. 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.
- Gatherings in campgrounds will be expected to follow the same rules for outdoor and indoor gatherings (see above)
- Questions about BC Parks can be directed to 1-800-689-9025

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.

Will businesses be allowed to ask their customers for proof of vaccination?

- No one will be required to provide proof of vaccination to access services provided by the government of BC. These are medical documents that contain personal health information.
- Public Health and WorkSafeBC will provide updated guidelines for businesses operating in Step 3 – there will be no recommendation that businesses ask for proof of vaccination.
- While government can't dictate exactly how businesses choose to operate, there are legal implications that businesses should consider. [Please visit go2HR for more details and their Employer Tool Kit](#)

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.

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Will rapid tests become more widely available in Step 2 of the Restart plan?

- The Province will continue to use PCR tests as we move through the Restart plan.
- Public health has significant testing capacity, and will continue to urge people who may be experiencing symptoms to call 811 or use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment App to find out if they need a test.
- The use of rapid tests has increased, and Government will do more in the future to support the PCR testing program.
- BC's Rapid Point-of-Care Screening Program is now available for organizations throughout the province. Industries and organizations whose settings or activities are associated with a higher risk of transmission can email RapidPOCTeam@phsa.ca for an intake assessment.

Will businesses be able to access information on what is allowed in different languages?

- PHO orders and WorkSafeBC guidance is available in a wide range of languages through the WorkSafeBC and BCCDC websites.
- As updated guidance for Step 3 is released, Government will ensure businesses have access to the information in a range of languages.

Will international travelers have to provide proof they've been vaccinated?

- 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.

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>