

Last Updated: May 7, 2020

Member Update: COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Dear Members,

Tourism Whistler remains committed to keeping you informed as the situation with COVID-19 evolves. New information, updates and resources are detailed below.

BC's Restart Plan

Yesterday afternoon, Premier John Horgan announced the details of BC's Restart Plan, which outlines a gradual re-opening of BC's provincial economy. Under BC's Restart Plan, restrictions will begin to ease in phases, slowly allowing for more social and economic activity. WorkSafeBC is developing industry-specific guidance to help employers bring workers and customers back safely, and sectors across the province have been asked to develop enhanced protocols aligned with public health and safety guidelines as they plan their re-openings.

BC is currently in Phase 1 of the restart plan. Phase 2 will begin mid-May when the province will see activities resume in areas such as retail, personal service establishments, restaurants, cafes and pubs, museums and art galleries, as well as parks, beaches and outdoor recreation.

If transmission rates remain low or in decline, Phase 3 will take place between June and September, and will include the re-opening of hotels and resorts, additional park openings, and overnight camping.

Phase 4 will not begin until the threat of COVID-19 has been significantly diminished through widespread vaccination, broad successful treatments, evidence of community immunity, or the equivalent.

For more information about BC's Restart Plan, visit www.gov.bc.ca/restartbc.

BC Parks Update

On May 14, most provincial parks in BC will re-open for day-use only. On June 1, many remaining facilities, including campgrounds, will re-open. A small number of parks that attract large crowds, or where re-opening could pose a health risk to nearby communities, will remain closed. Provincial parks in the Sea to Sky region that will **remain closed** include Brandywine Falls Provincial Park, Garibaldi Provincial Park, Joffre Lakes Provincial Park, Murrin Provincial Park, Nairn Falls Provincial Park, Shannon Falls Provincial Park and Stawamus Chief Provincial Park.

In keeping with public health guidelines around non-essential travel, BC Parks is urging the public to only visit provincial parks near their homes, and to avoid travelling to recreate in

parks in small communities. More information, including a detailed list of which parks will be open, is available at [BCparks.ca](https://bcparks.ca).

COVID-19 Sentiment & Travel Intentions Research Insights

Tourism Whistler recently surveyed our Research Panel to measure COVID-19 sentiment and 2020 travel intentions. The survey was conducted by email from April 23 through to April 30, and was sent to 5,700 people. We received 1,787 responses for a 31% response rate – Tourism Whistler’s most answered survey since the Research Panel’s inception. This survey was the first in a series Tourism Whistler plans to distribute over the next several months to monitor trends and changes in COVID-19 and travel sentiment. The second survey will be distributed later in May.

View the results of the survey, and insights that can be leveraged for business recovery planning, in the report posted on the [member website](#).

Tourism Resiliency Program

Destination BC has launched the [Vancouver, Coast & Mountains \(VCM\) Tourism Resiliency Program](#) to provide tourism businesses in the region with meaningful, one-on-one support to navigate government resources and expert advice, and work towards eventual recovery.

The VCM Tourism Resiliency Program includes two components:

1. Tourism businesses will be paired with a Program Advisor who will provide guidance through their journey to long-term resiliency. Through a needs assessment by phone, Program Advisors will facilitate customized support for each business that includes navigating available federal and provincial aid and access to Program Experts in Human Resources.
2. A [digital resource hub](#) featuring webinars, information bulletins, and additional resources specific to the needs of BC’s tourism businesses.

We encourage you to visit <https://tourismresiliency.ca/vcmtrp/> to learn more and to register for the program if your business requires support navigating the resources available.

Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices

Maintaining engagement on your social media channels during this challenging time will help keep consumers connected with your brand, and can help inspire future travel when the time is right. With that in mind, Destination BC has developed a Virtual Experiences Best Practices Guide to help tourism stakeholders across the province develop inspiring virtual content to share with their followers.

View DBC’s Virtual Experiences Best Practices Guide here:
https://www.destinationbc.ca/content/uploads/2020/04/031_VirtualExperience_FINAL.pdf

Additionally, the Regional Destination Management Organizations of British Columbia (as a group, BC's Regional Tourism Secretariat) have partnered to develop a social media guidelines document, outlining best practices and recommendations on how to keep followers engaged and connected to your brand during the pandemic.

Download the Social Media Toolkit here:

<https://app.hubspot.com/documents/7247350/view/73914529?accessId=717360>

Finally, Don't forget to tag your social media posts with #OnlyinWhistler so that we can share your images and stories through our channels, and email your content ideas to content@tourismwhistler.com.

Recommended Key Messaging

At this time, Tourism Whistler recommends the following key messaging:

- Provincial health authorities continue to recommend British Columbians avoid non-essential travel at this time, but we look forward to welcoming our guests back to Whistler **soon**.
- Please continue to follow the recommendations of health authorities to keep yourself and other safe – wash your hands regularly, practice social distancing, and stay home if you are feeling unwell.
- While many provincial parks in BC will re-open for day-use on May 14, parks that attract large crowds, or where re-opening could pose a health risk to nearby communities, will remain closed. Parks in the Sea to Sky region that will **remain closed** until further notice include:

Brandywine Falls Provincial Park, Garibaldi Provincial Park, Joffre Lakes Provincial Park, Murrin Provincial Park, Nairn Falls Provincial Park, Shannon Falls Provincial Park and Stawamus Chief Provincial Park. More information is available at BCparks.ca.

- COVID-19 information and resources for travellers is available at whistler.com/covid.
- Anyone with questions related to COVID-19 or public health in Whistler should consult Vancouver Coastal Health, the health authority for our region.

Additional COVID-19 Information & Resources

- Vancouver Coastal Health - <http://www.vch.ca/about-us/news/vancouver-coastal-health-statement-on-coronavirus>
- BC Centre for Disease Control - [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>
- HealthLink BC - <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-covid-19>
- World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- Destination BC - <https://www.destinationbc.ca/news/coronavirus-update/>
- Whistler Chamber of Commerce - <https://www.whistlerchamber.com/covid-19-guidance-and-resources-for-whistler-businesses/>
- Resort Municipality of Whistler - <https://www.whistler.ca/services/emergency/covid-19-coronavirus>
- Small Business BC - <https://covid.smallbusinessbc.ca/hc/en-us>
- Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan - canada.ca/covid-19
- BC's Response to COVID-19 - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>

Additional questions can be directed to membercommunications@tourismwhistler.com.