



Rebuilding Traveller Confidence:

The importance of keeping safety top of mind and in plain sight

51°17'51.7"N 117°02'52.4"W

Golden

British Columbia





We know that safety is top of mind for Canadians across the country. We also know that you, as a tourism business, have implemented safety measures for travellers, your staff and your communities. As we enter a resurgence of COVID-19 in several provinces across the country, keeping safety top of mind and in plain sight remains critical as ever.

Looking back on past months, we've compiled some practices highlighted by government, research and consumer surveys and tourism businesses. Whether these are measures you already have in place, or new ideas to consider, this guide offers four simple themes that have risen to the top for small businesses to help restore and cultivate confidence within Canadian travellers by showing that safety is in everyone's best interest.

We also share some best-in-class examples from your tourism industry peers from coast to coast to coast. Tourism operators across Canada are exhibiting strong resilience and innovation as they adapt to this new, ever-changing state of play.



1

Stay informed

Stay up-to-date with the status of COVID-19 infections as well as current health and safety regulations for small businesses. These guidelines are continually revised in relation to the number of active COVID-19 cases in each region. It may also be helpful to review consumer research to gain a deeper understanding of Canadians' priorities and concerns in relation to domestic travel.

How can you stay informed?

- Keep in touch with your Provincial Marketing Organization (PMO) and tourism associations by subscribing to newsletters and accessing webinars and training support.
- Check the Destination Canada website for [industry resources](#), subscribe to [Destination Canada News](#) and the [Business Events partner newsletter](#).
- Destination Canada produces regular tourism market intelligence, industry and data analysis. Keep track of this vital information on the [Destination Canada](#) website.

2

Emphasize safety

Above all, your guests want their vacation to be safe and stress-free. By delivering the latest accurate information on travel restrictions and safety regulations, you're providing peace of mind to travellers. Research tells us that safety is the primary concern of Canadians, with 75 percent of respondents indicating that clear communication of protection measures is the top factor for selecting travel¹.

What can you do right now to put your guests' minds at ease?

- **Create new content for your website and social media pages to demonstrate the experience your business is offering.** This content should showcase the safety measures being implemented, while still emphasizing enjoyment. See '[Top Tips for Creating COVID-Conscious Content](#)' below.
- **Take cleanliness to the next level.** A majority of Canadians still consider a combination of many health and safety practices to be very important when travelling. Further, 54% of restaurant patrons and 58% of hotel guests want to see cleaning procedures underway.² Create content that showcases your cleaning team and the pride they take in keeping guests safe. Explain your safety procedures frequently across website, emails, product listings, guest areas, photography and promotional activity. Clear, frequent communication builds consumer confidence.
- **Check out other tour operator websites and social media for inspiration.** For example, Banff Gondola features a devoted page outlining the [Banff Gondola Safety Promise](#). Likewise, [Nita Lake Lodge](#) features an Instagram story outlining the many safety and sanitation procedures in place.
- **Update your Google listings, TripAdvisor and OTA listings.** These sites now feature the enhanced protocols and cleaning procedures your business is providing consumers³.
- When hosting groups or events, ensure you follow [industry guidelines](#) for safe meetings and keep your clients informed of what those procedures are.
- Encourage the use of [COVID Alert App](#) with your staff and guests. Available in several provinces, this app lets people know of possible exposures before any symptoms appear.

¹ Leger '[Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on Tourism in North America](#)'

² Destination Canada 2020 Global Tourism Watch COVID Special Surveys¹ June-August 2020¹

³ TripAdvisor '[How to Improve Guest Confidence with TripAdvisor's Travel Safe Initiative](#)', Google '[Guide for Businesses affected by COVID-19](#)'



Monsieur Jean, Quebec

The team at luxury boutique hotel **Monsieur Jean** donned their creative hats in lockdown by producing a delightful home video outlining the property's strict new health and safety measures. They deployed the video in a special newsletter, featured it on the hotel website and uploaded it to Pinterest. To further drive interest and awareness, they launched a contest with talk show host Julie Snyder, with the grand prize a stay in one of Monsieur Jean's stunning suites.



Top tips for creating COVID-conscious content⁴



Focus on desirable experiences, such as the outdoors, wildlife, relaxation.



Demonstrate socially-distant experiences and small tours.



Emphasize either the physical space or intimacy offered by specific experiences.



Consider if images are reflecting a household group or multiple household groups.



When clearly household groups, the scene could include up to six people. For multiple groups, all parties should be six feet apart.



Reconsider physical affection and greetings in imagery. Avoid hugs, high-fives etc.



If content is shot during the pandemic, consider subtly including COVID-19 safety precautions such as masks, plexiglass, social distancing markers without dominating the shot.

⁴ Supported by Destination Canada '2020 Global Tourism Watch COVID Special Surveys' June-August 2020.



Kelowna Concierge, British Columbia

Kelowna Concierge provides destination management, transportation and event support for business events (meetings, incentive programs) hosted in Kelowna. When their programs dried up as a result of the pandemic, Kelowna Concierge used their transferable skills to expand into new areas, including:

- Kelowna Concierge private airport shuttles were used to isolate returning Canadians who needed to quarantine from drivers and other passengers.
- Vehicles being redeployed to provide COVID-safe wine tours.
- Expanding beyond Kelowna to include small groups (golf, weddings) seeking COVID-safe group transportation.
- Expanding transportation services to include Revelstoke, Silver Star and beyond for the upcoming ski season.
- Offering logistics and planning skills to organizations who no longer have executive administrators to plan corporate activities.



Drake Hotel, Ontario

The boutique Drake Hotel is striking a balance between elevated guest safety and exceptional hospitality with the introduction of **GOODCLEANFUN**. Implemented at the company's properties in Toronto and Prince Edward County, the initiative involves a series of strict new safety protocols, including contactless delivery and takeout at hotel restaurants, triple-sanitized rooms using electrostatic cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas with hospitality-grade virucides. At the same time, the guest experience is seeing a makeover, with virtual music and art programming planned throughout the summer, and meal and cocktail kits fuelling at-home dining. The goal is to foster safe and conscientious travel that supports communities while encouraging locals and visitors to live their best lives.



Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario

After engaging audiences online with #ROMatHome, **ROM** reopened to the public with new safety protocols and promotions to entice visitors back including free entry for frontline workers and visitors 25 years and under. The website homepage features a prominent section about how to plan a visit including information for existing members, what to expect while visiting and how to save on admission with Toronto's CityPASS. The museum prioritized enjoyment, entertainment and safety as it implemented timed ticketing to monitor capacity, directional signage for physical distancing, hand sanitizer stations, mandatory masks and QR codes to scan and interact with exhibitions via guest's own devices.

3

Adapt your business

Consumer preferences continue to change and evolve as the global pandemic continues. Consider the best ways you could adjust your business offering to meet these new preferences. For example, research tells us travellers are more likely to reduce daily activities while on vacation to limit social interaction and are less interested in indoor and group activities⁵.

⁵ Destination Canada '2020 Global Tourism Watch COVID Special Surveys' June-August 2020'

How can you meet consumer preferences?

- **Create richer, deeper experiences that allow for small, personalized groups and individuals.** For example, New Brunswick's [Roads to Sea](#) adapted its offering to small tours only, accommodating private bubbles of families and friends, while complying with COVID-19 safety guidelines.
- **Review innovative packages offered by other tourism operators.** For example, Frontiers North Adventures, whose clients are typically from overseas, transformed its guided tours to DIY [self-drive experiences](#). Reframing the summer Arctic safari package for Canadians, the usual guided package tour was offered as a more affordable drive-and-ride DIY adventure.
- **Embrace digital contact lists⁶.** Now is the time to boost your database and subscriber lists. Connect with your database through inspiring content to stimulate bookings now and remain top-of-mind for when travellers are ready to book their next vacation.
- **Offer flexible bookings so that your guests feel confident to book now⁷.**
- **Implement best practice marketing tactics.** Destination Canada has created a series of simple [Tips and Tricks](#) videos to help you get the most out of your marketing efforts, reach your customers and remain competitive.

⁶ Phocuswire '[Destination marketing is not just about the recovery - it's now a long game](#)'

⁷ TripAdvisor '[How to Improve Guest Confidence with TripAdvisor's Travel Safe Initiative](#)'



Experience PEI, Prince Edward Island

Cultural activity and food tour operator [Experience PEI](#) treated tourists to a taste of the island with PEI in a Box, a decadent assortment of locally sourced treats and virtual delights that ships anywhere in Canada. An adaptation of its popular walking tour Taste the Town, PEI in a Box is a picnic for two that features decadent fare such as lobster meat, cured meats, cheeses and raspberry cordial from local producers, and ships the picnic-for-two anywhere in Canada. The box also comes with virtual treats, including an online cooking class, a musical serenade by a local performer and a live reading from Anne of Green Gables. Even better, \$5 from every box sold is donated to the Upper Room Foodbank in Charlottetown.



Calgary Zoo, Alberta

Calgary Zoo is emphasizing visitor safety with necessary precautions like pre-purchased tickets and one-directional traffic—but that's just the beginning. In July, the attraction introduced [Locked Zoo](#), the city's largest escape experience, where participants were tasked to find clues, solve puzzles and visit resident animals along the way. Guests move through the experience with people in their social bubbles, and are encouraged to wear masks. Strict sanitization measures are applied between groups.



Intercontinental Hotels

Intercontinental Hotels launched the [Work from Hotel](#) package to entice guests back. Rolled out at the Intercontinental Toronto, Intercontinental Toronto Yorkville and Intercontinental Montreal properties, it flips the focus from overnight stays to day use. Customers pay a day rate (starting at \$99 at the Intercontinental Montreal) for use of a spacious and recently renovated room that has been cleaned according to the property's enhanced protocols. The fee covers an eight-hour period that falls within a normal working day. And while restaurants and dining spaces remain closed, room service, delivered by a masked and gloved employee, is available.



Vallée du Parc, Quebec

Situated in Shawnigan, downhill skiing centre [Vallée du Parc](#) is treating residents to much-needed entertainment with a seasonal drive-through cinema. Films are announced at the beginning of each month, and safety protocols are implemented, including online ticketing, mandatory masks for guests exiting their vehicles, and a maximum of one person allowed at a time in restroom facilities.



Churchill River Canoe Outfitters, Saskatchewan

Missinipe-based [Churchill River Canoe Outfitters](#) put a positive spin on the pandemic by promoting local explorations. The company offered five low-cost, multi-day trips to local waterfalls, channels and lakes exclusively during summer as a way to encourage locals to leave the confines of their homes and safely spend time in the rejuvenating outdoors.



Hornblower Niagara Cruises, Ontario

Unable to operate at usual capacities, the premier attraction in Niagara Falls adapted its business model in the face COVID-19 with new VIP tours. Up to six guests can purchase a private boat tour that sails right up to the base of the Canadian Horseshoe Falls. Health and safety guidelines at the Hornblower include mandatory face masks, guest temperature checks, and timed ticketing.



Krugofest, Saskatchewan

[Krugofest](#) was a new summer festival in Regina that partnered with local businesses to create a unique music festival experience. Small groups could book a private hotel room and attend the music festival from their balcony. The price points were about \$600 per night for a hotel room, which included a meal by a Saskatchewan chef and concerts by local Canadian artists. Proceeds from each ticket also went to the Regina Food Bank.

4

Embrace the shoulder season

Following the challenging summer tourism season, it is important not to overlook shoulder season opportunities. Research reveals that 70 percent of people plan to avoid large groups of people when travelling, while 57 percent will avoid travel in peak seasons⁸. Further, of those who intend to travel domestically within the next 12 months, 46% intend to travel between September-December 2020.⁹

⁸ Leger '[Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on Tourism in North America](#)'. Also supported by Destination Canada '2020 Global Tourism Watch COVID Special Survey - Wave 2 July 2020', TripAdvisor '[Beyond COVID-19: The Road to Recovery for the Travel Industry](#)'

⁹ Destination Canada '2020 Global Tourism Watch COVID Special Survey' August 2020.

How can you harness the shoulder season?

- Communicate with your guests via e-newsletters, direct emails and social media, highlighting the special experiences that await during the shoulder season.
- Place emphasis on your business being accessible via road (if this is the case). Research results show that road trips are trending and 44% of Canadians are comfortable taking one¹⁰.
- Create engaging content to showcase that the experience you're offering is equally amazing during the shoulder season. If this is not possible, use the time to craft compelling videos and imagery ready for use ahead of next summer.
- Consider hosting small, safe meetings or events, if your space allows - the shoulder season is a great time to welcome corporate groups looking for quiet places to meet mid-week.

¹⁰ Leger '[Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on Tourism in North America](#)', Also supported by Google '[Make informed travel decisions with confidence](#)', Ipsos '[Longing for the Road](#)'



Canadian Mountain Holidays, British Columbia

Heli-ski tour operator CMH capitalized on their off-season and [conducted a dry run](#) of a 30-person ski tour in the middle of summer to see how safe the company could operate ahead of winter. Each 'guest' underwent a thorough questionnaire about their health, wore masks in the bus, on the flight up the mountain, and in the lodge; they sanitized hands and equipment and remained separated from each other by the now-familiar six-foot rule. The two-day simulation helped refine every aspect of its operation.

Luv'n the Loops Passport program, British Columbia

Similar to many other local destination marketing organizations, Tourism Kamloops is inviting locals and visitors to explore Kamloops' top attractions for a chance to win seasonal prize packs. [Locals can sign up](#), opt in to promotional emails then enjoy promotional offers and collect a virtual stamp from each venue. Each additional stamp scanned and added to the online passport will bring participants closer to the next prize tier. The program is long-term, encouraging continued visitation over the shoulder and winter season with prizes announced in October, January, April and July.





Have you pivoted your business
in response to COVID-19?

[Send us a note.](#)

We'd love to hear from you.

