

B.C. restricts camping, leisure travel in crackdown

Small motels, private campgrounds hit as province cracks down on non-essential travel and warns Alberta tourists to stay away

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— Campgrounds will halt bookings during latest travel restrictions. | Re/Max
B.C. Premier John Horgan said orders will be issued by April 23 that will restrict people's ability to leave their health authorities. The measures will continue in the May long weekend.
"At this point, non-essential travel should be limited to local travel only," he said. The premier reinforced Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry's message from last week, encouraging British Columbians to stay in their respective neighbourhoods. All current guidelines and orders will remain in place. However, people will not be able to book camping spots outside of their respective health areas because the tour operator in that community will not book them.

On April 23, Minister of Public Safety Mike Farnworth will issue orders under the Emergency Program Act to restrict people's ability to leave their health authority.

"This will be conducted through random audits, not unlike roadside stops for a counter-attack during the Christmas season. They will be susceptible to all travellers, not just a few travellers, and again they will be random and there will be a fine if you are travelling outside of your area, without a legitimate reason," said Horgan.

Horgan stated that BC Ferries will stop accepting bookings for recreational vehicles like campers and trailers as of April 23. It will also be contacting its passengers that have booked reservations to make sure that their travel is essential and not recreational.

Additionally, the province will be putting new border signs along the Alberta border, reminding travellers coming from outside the province, that unless they're coming for essential business, they should not enter B.C.

Leisure travel allowed smaller hotels and motels in secondary cities to perform better than hotels in large cities that rely on international and corporate bookings, according to HVS International. The outlier hotels and motels saw revenue per available room fall 40 per cent in 2020, but hotel revenue in bigger cities dropped by an average of 70 per cent in 2020, compared to a year earlier.