



May 4, 2021

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Mayors and Regional District Chairs of British Columbia  
Attendees of April 27, 2021 calls with Minister Osborne and Minister Farnworth

Dear Mayors and Chairs:

Thank you for joining Minister Osborne and Minister Farnworth on April 27, 2021 on the special update calls with respect to the non-essential travel restrictions currently in place in BC. Here is a brief summary of the information provided during the calls as well as an update on the enforcement of the travel restrictions.

On Friday, April 23, 2021 on the advice of Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, Minister Farnworth issued an [Order](#) under the Emergency Program Act to prohibit non-essential travel **between** three regional zones in the province, using health authority boundaries. The Order is in effect from **April 23 through to May 25, 2021, after the May long weekend**.

**Non-essential travel** includes travel for vacations, weekend getaways and tourism activities, visiting family and friends for social reasons and recreation activities.

The three **regional zones** covered by the Order are:

- Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley (Fraser Health and Coastal Health regions);
- Vancouver Island (Island Health region); and
- Northern/Interior (Interior Health and Northern Health regions, including Bella Coola Valley, the Central Coast and Hope).

**Essential travel** between regions is allowed, and includes travelling for work, commercial transportation of goods, attending classes at a post-secondary institution or school, and attending a funeral. A more detailed list for essential travel can be found in the Order (see a summary [here](#)).

During the first week of the new travel restrictions a significant reduction in non-essential travel was achieved and building off this success in limiting non-essential travel, the province has authorized site-specific, clearly marked **police road checks** on highway corridors that connect different regions to further curb recreational travel. Police will not engage in random checks of vehicles or people on the street.

The RCMP will deploy a trained, dedicated team to manage and enforce road check locations, and ensure interactions are in line with the intent of the Order and all existing police policy and standards. The goal of these road checks is education and further discouraging people from travelling for non-essential reasons.

If police determine a vehicle is travelling for non-essential reasons, police will instruct the driver to turn around and return to the region they came from. If compliance measures are deemed necessary by police, fines of \$575 can be handed out. Note that people from outside the province who are travelling in BC for non-essential reasons can be subject to the same enforcement measures.

For more information see the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General's [news release](#) from April 30, 2021.

More information on travel and COVID-19 can be found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/travel/current>.

In addition to the Order, **a variety of coordination and communication measures** to further limit non-essential travel – including measures around accommodation bookings, increased signage at highways and border crossings, BC Ferries traffic, and campground reservations – have been put in place.

BC Ferries will continue to provide regular service to ensure commercial vehicle traffic and essential traffic can be maintained. You can review [essential travel information from BC Ferries](#) here. BC Parks camping reservations in another region can be [rescheduled or canceled for free at any time and a full refund](#) will be provided.

In addition to restrictions on travel between regions, please keep in mind that the strengthened [province-wide restrictions](#) that came into effect on March 29 are also still in place through to May 25, including that everyone should stay within their local communities. Now is not the time for overnight vacations away from your community. Stay close to home and visit local beaches, hiking trails or parks, to avoid non-essential travel within your region.

Dr. Henry stresses that although a high number of people are being vaccinated every day, the province is far from having “community immunity”. It will take some time before all of us can let our guard down and right now, we all need to continue doing the things that prevent transmission of the virus. Your assistance in sharing this message in your communities is very much appreciated.

The more restrictive COVID-19 measures over the next few weeks are hard for all of us – for governments, for businesses, for individuals in communities throughout BC. On behalf of Minister Osborne, once again, I cannot thank you enough as local government leaders for your continued leadership and dedication during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Tara Faganello  
Assistant Deputy Minister

pc: Chief Administrative Officers  
Gary MacIsaac, Executive Director, UBCM  
Nancy Taylor, Executive Director, LGMA  
Todd Pugh, Executive Director, CivicInfo