



BC PARKS TRAVEL TRADE UPDATE 2020/21 CAMPING SEASON

Dear Tour Operator,

As demand for camping and recreation opportunities continues to increase within our provincial parks, we are taking added measures to ensure that access to campsites and outdoor experiences within BC Parks is fair and equitable to our visitors.

Unfortunately, during the 2019 camping season, BC Parks encountered a series of occurrences with tour operators making reservations using the Discover Camping Reservation system that violated reservation system policies, and in some instances were also found to be in contravention of the BC Park Act for operating without a valid Park Use Permit for conducting guided tours within BC Parks.

Standard procedure in such cases is to immediately suspend all commercial activity and fine as appropriate all businesses found to be in non-compliance with BC Parks' policies and regulations. Out of respect and consideration for our British Columbia tourism partners and communities, and especially unsuspecting travellers that may have found themselves and their travel plans negatively impacted by such actions, BC Parks proceeded with a lenient approach through to the end of the 2019 camping season while working to bring those tour operators into compliance.

As our commitment to B.C. residents and visitors, BC Parks will be stepping up its compliance and enforcement efforts for the 2020/21 camping season to ensure that policies and provincial regulations are adhered to so as to safeguard the fair and equitable access to BC Parks that we are designated to provide.

In this effort, BC Parks is providing the following notice well in advance of the 2020/21 camping season to avoid any unnecessary impacts to your operations or traveling clients, and so you may make any adjustments to their itineraries that may be required.

For camping reservations or any other commercial activity undertaken by tour operators that are found to be non-compliant with BC Parks' Discover Camping Reservation System Policies and BC Park Act Regulations, the following actions will be taken:

- If invalid reservations are found during internal reservation audits, they will be cancelled immediately by BC Parks.
- B.C. Park Operators will no longer allow customers to check in without valid ID that corresponds with their reservation system confirmation details.
- If customers arrive without valid ID, they will be turned away or charged again.
- Any tour operator group tours that are accompanied by a guide must have a Park Use Permit in place for all parks on itinerary (including front-country camping); failing to do so will result in the immediate suspension of all reservations and/or commercial activity made by the tour operator and additional financial penalties will be pursued.

Working with Destination BC, the BC Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, along with B.C.'s tourism regions and partners, BC Parks is proud to promote our beautiful province and remains committed to providing exceptional visitor experiences. We hope that you all have a successful 2020/21 travel season and thank you for helping BC Parks manage our valued natural resource and to deliver a fair and equitable opportunity for all to enjoy our parks.

Sincerely,



David Ranson,
Executive Director, BC Parks – Provincial Services Branch
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

For more information, please visit: (<http://bcparks.ca/resources/travel-trade/> with information for Tour Operators featuring e.g. Discover Camping Reservation Policies, Park Use Permit application info, contact info for inquiries etc.).

