

**READY TO REOPEN 2.0**

# **WINERY AND HOSPITALITY BEST PRACTICES**



**NEW NORMAL. SAME GENUINE PEOPLE.  
SAME BREATHTAKING PLACES. A NEW GREAT EXPERIENCE.**

*As of June 15, 2021*



**WINES OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

# INTRODUCTION

These COVID-19 health and safety protocols for wineries and hospitality are recommendations based on [BC's Restart: A plan to bring us back together](#) and [WorkSafeBC's guidelines for restaurants, cafés and pubs](#) along with extensive input from BC regional winery associations, industry stakeholders and Wine Growers British Columbia (WGBC) member wineries.

The diversity of wineries in British Columbia means that a one-size-fits-all approach is not possible. Each recommendation and practice should be applied as applicable to individual winery operations, while also following the guidance issued by [WorkSafeBC](#), the [Provincial Health Officer](#) and the appropriate local health authority.

The information in this document is based on current recommendations and may change. For the latest guidance, please see the health information from the [British Columbia Centre for Disease Control](#) and the latest news from the [Government of British Columbia](#).

Employers are advised to remain apprised of orders issued by the Provincial Health Officer as this information may change.

# BACKGROUND

On May 14, 2020 WGBC engaged industry stakeholders in a constructive dialogue around reopening guidelines, and ultimately best practices, specific to the BC wine industry. Together, this input has resulted in the development of recommended best practices for your winery to safely operate hospitality, tasting room and wine touring operations while complying with government recommendations and ensuring the safety of employees and customers.

On May 25, 2021, the province of British Columbia unveiled its four-step [Restart Plan](#) which focuses on gradually resuming social and business activities, while protecting people and safely getting life back to normal. Please refer to BC's Restart Plan to best understand the plan timeline and how the province will move through the plan. You can also view the BC Restart Plan four-step graphic [here](#).

## COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN

Employers are required to develop a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) that outlines the policies, guidelines and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Employers must involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace.

Employers are not required to submit plans to WorkSafeBC for approval, but in accordance with the order of the Provincial Health Officer, this plan must be posted at the worksite. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, they will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers or to see the COVID-19 Safety Plan.

One part of developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan is identifying protocols that everyone at the workplace must follow to keep workers safe. Outlined in this document are industry-specific protocols to consider as you continue to update and develop the plan for your workplace.

These protocols are not a list of requirements; however, they should be considered and implemented to the extent that they address the risks to your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the protocols suggested here do not sufficiently address the risk to your workers.

## UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them and the number of people you come near. Physical-distancing measures and proper [use of masks](#) help mitigate this risk.

The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact the same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

# BC LIQUOR MANUFACTURER LICENCE; LOUNGES, PATIOS AND TASTING ROOMS

Wineries, breweries and distilleries in BC must have a BC Liquor Manufacturer Licence. Other manufacturing licence endorsements include on-site retail store, picnic area or special event area.

The following suggested protocols are specific to those holding a BC Liquor Manufacturer Licence including lounges, patios and tasting rooms. Refer also to any applicable practices in the [WorkSafeBC protocols](#) for restaurants, cafés and bars.



## TOURISM RESEARCH

Key findings from Destination British Columbia's recent [BC Residents' Public Perceptions: COVID-19 Travel and Tourism Wave 26 Report](#) (May 12, 2021) indicate that while British Columbians are interested in travelling within BC, there is also a sense of concern within British Columbia of welcoming visitors into their community. Findings also show that British Columbians are seeking outdoor experiences this summer.

- 96% BC residents intend to travel to nearby communities (day trip) in the next 12 months
- 82% BC residents intend to travel elsewhere in BC (overnight trip) in the next 12 months
- 82% BC residents would feel more comfortable welcoming visitors if local businesses enforced all health and safety protocols
- 57% BC residents would feel comfortable visiting an outdoor tourist destination

As more and more visitors come to visit our wineries, we look forward to being able to provide them with a tasting experience, unique to our industry, that will allow them and our staff to feel safe and continue to have an enjoyable time.

## REASSURE VISITORS THAT BC WINERIES ARE A SAFE PLACE TO VISIT

- ✓ Post your COVID-19 Safety Plan: WorksafeBC mandates that all businesses have a COVID-19 safety plan, accessible to guests and employees and posted to the business website.
- ✓ Upload your COVID-19 Safety Plans to [HelloBC Listings](#).
- ✓ Share your safety protocols on all consumer-facing social channels to clearly demonstrate the precautions you are taking to keep people safe.
- ✓ Talk openly about the safety measures being taken at your winery.
- ✓ Leverage [Go2HR BSAFE Online Health and Safety Training Program](#) to reassure British Columbians that it is safe to welcome visitors into your winery.



## GUIDED TOURS AND OUTDOOR TASTINGS

The following guidelines and recommendations for optimizing hospitality and outdoor winery experiences are based on input from consumer research and industry reports to help understand what consumers want and what wineries can do to drive visitors to the cellar door this season. These guidelines were developed in consultation with the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB).

Experiences rooted in the outdoors will be a focus this summer for wineries, businesses and visitors. To accommodate outdoor tastings, wineries need a licence that permits them to set up an outdoor area where they can conduct tastings.

With the BC Liquor Manufacturer Licence and as outlined in Guided Tours in the [Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Liquor Policy Manual](#), wineries with manufacturing features (e.g. winery facility, vineyard, etc.) can conduct guided tours with tastings on their premises and properties. A licensee does not have to apply for a tour endorsement if they have these features that allow them to provide an educational component on the processes used to make the manufacturers product (e.g. wine).

While on a guided tour, your tour route is considered a "service area", which permits the service or sale\* of samples\* to persons on the tour. Guided tours can be conducted on the property, and a station to shelter guests (e.g. outdoor canopy) while the tour is being held can be developed. (No sales or service other than tastings can be conducted on this site).

These tours are permitted in any area of your business but are only permitted outside if there are exterior features related to manufacturing, such as a vineyard. This allows wineries to develop unique curated tasting and educational experiences inside or outside of the facility. According to Destination British Columbia consumer research, including new experiential components that highlight the connection to locally produced wine and food are strong motivators to encourage short-haul travel this season and a big part of BC's destination identity.

**\*Samples** are a small amount intended to demonstrate what the product tastes like unless you have a lounge endorsement. Without a lounge or special event area endorsement you can only sell a limited volume of liquor for sampling purposes. A maximum individual serving size is 50ml of wine. Multiple servings (e.g. flights) are permitted to a total maximum of 150 ml per person per day. The maximum sample amounts per person per day applies regardless of where the liquor is provided, either in a designated sampling area or on a guided tour or both.

**\*Selling** includes any form of indirect sale, such as charging patrons for a tour that comes with a sample, offering liquor with the purchase of food, or charging for entertainment that includes liquor in the price. If you provide free samples to your customers, the maximum individual serving size listed above still applies. There are no specified limits on the total volume of free samples you may provide, however a winery must never serve or sell samples to the point of intoxication.

## RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES ON LCRB GUIDED TOURS POLICY

Consider adding options for outdoor tours or tastings. These may include, but are not limited to:

- ✔ Guided walk through the vineyard
- ✔ Sustainability Tours (composting programs, beehive programs, etc.)
- ✔ Soil pit visits
- ✔ Vegetable/herb garden walks
- ✔ Outdoor cabana tastings
- ✔ Outdoor picnic or local fair
- ✔ Terroir-focused wine tastings (use of soil and rock samples)
- ✔ Grape to glass tastings (tasting of the grapes from the vines)
- ✔ Single-vineyard wine tastings
- ✔ Locally sourced wine and food pairings
- ✔ Vertical tastings

## NOT PERMITTED UNDER LCRB GUIDED TOURS POLICY

- ✘ Full wine service
- ✘ Self-serve
- ✘ Consumption of wine not considered a sample size  
*(Sample size: 50ml of wine. Multiple servings (e.g. flights) are permitted to a total maximum of 150 ml per person per day).*
- ✘ Sale transactions



## DIVERSIFY AND ENHANCE YOUR WINERY OFFERINGS

Get innovative! Consider new opportunities and partnership to bring more offerings to your guests this season.

- ✔ Offer different levels of tastings.
- ✔ From budget-friendly, entry-level tastings to full-scale luxury and educational experiences.
- ✔ Seek out creative partnerships to offer new experiences.
- ✔ Work with a local tour or accommodation provider to have your product delivered to their guests.
- ✔ Engage a local campground or lodge to deliver an outdoor on-site wine tasting.
- ✔ Work with a local partner in the culinary industry to offer outdoor picnics of wine and local fair (Note: Picnic endorsement is required).
- ✔ Train and educate your employees.
- ✔ Get certified! Enroll your employees in the [Wines of British Columbia Ambassador Program](#) and enhance your tours and tastings with highly trained and knowledgeable ambassadors.
- ✔ Offer experiences rooted in the outdoors.
- ✔ Consider adding one of the above recommended options for outdoor tastings.
- ✔ Promote your outdoor offerings.
- ✔ Update your winery tasting room hours and experiences on the Wines of BC Explorer App.
- ✔ Share on social media and tag us [@WineBCdotcom](#) to amplify.



## EMPLOYEES

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Provide training to all employees on:
  - Proper sanitization and personal hygiene requirements consistent with [British Columbia Centre for Disease Control](#).
  - Importance of not coming to work if sick\*
  - Symptom criteria for COVID-19
  - Physical distancing
- Implement team scheduling where possible with rotating shifts to avoid cross-contamination.
- Modify or eliminate in-person meetings and morning huddles; when in-person meetings are required, hold them outside where the risk of transmission is lower.
- Maintain a two-metre distance from other workers and guests.
- Masks required in all public indoor areas. Refer to [WorkSafeBC's guidance](#) on mask requirements.
- Encourage the practice of not coming into contact with employees from alternate teams during a shift.
- Avoid or do not permit visiting the workplace during off-days to avoid cross-contamination.
- Where possible, separate lunch or break rooms to accommodate two-metre distance between employees.
- Post signage promoting two-metre physical distancing in employee areas.

### CLEANING AND SANITIZATION

- Regular sanitization of phones and service tools.
- Do not permit and remove personal items from the floor.

### HEALTH AND HYGIENE

- Required to inform management of any flu-like symptoms and quarantine for 14 days.
- [Proper use of masks](#).
- Instructed to wash hands, or use sanitizer when a sink is not available, after the following activities: using the restroom, sneezing, touching the face, blowing the nose, cleaning, sweeping, mopping, smoking, eating, drinking, going on break and before or after starting a shift.
- Proper handwashing signs posted throughout the facility ([COVID-19 Handwashing Poster](#)).
- Temperature check before entry, if possible. Arrive for shift in uniform including mask.
- Breaks to be taken outside when possible.
- Eliminate hand-to-hand contact with customers or other employees (handshakes, fist bumps, high-fives, wine glass clinks etc.).

### GENERAL

- Pre-shifts daily to provide updates, done outside where possible.
- Staff rooms to be frequently cleaned and used primarily for food storage.

\* See details on [provincial COVID-19 paid sick leave](#)





## LOBBIES AND ENTRANCEWAYS

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Post signage promoting two-metre physical distancing upon entry to tasting room, retail store, patio and restaurants indicating the maximum number of guests.
- Determine maximum capacity for tasting room, retail store, patio and restaurant adhering to government mandates.
- Assign a designated greeter or host to welcome guests and manage customer flow while monitoring a two-metre physical distancing during the entering and exiting process.
- Masks required in all public indoor areas. Consider making masks available to guests. Refer to [WorkSafeBC's guidance](#) on mask requirements.
- Establish separate entry and exit points where possible.
- Two-metre markers on floors for any areas that lineups may occur (e.g. reservation desks, host stands).

### CLEANING AND SANITIZATION

- Portable hand sanitizer stations at entry and exit points.
- Regular sanitization of frequently used areas and touchpoint devices.

### HEALTH AND HYGIENE

- Prior to entry, guests will be asked if they have travelled in the last 14 days.
- Prior to entry, guests will be asked if they are experiencing any flu-like symptoms.
- Prior to entry, guests must be wearing a mask.
- Increase ventilation for indoor spaces to allow for greater air turnover.
- Extra garbage receptacles throughout the visiting spaces.
- Removal of furniture and public seating areas in waiting areas.
- Ask guests to wait outside for a table, tasting or to purchase should lobby or entranceway exceed maximum capacity.



## TASTING ROOMS

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Reservations highly encouraged, with policies and procedures in place to manage walk-in guests.
- Designate controlled tasting locations separate from the retail stores where possible.
- Configure seating to comply with physical-distancing requirements. Ensure tasting stations are spaced at least two metres apart so that distancing of two metres between parties is maintained, including when customers approach or leave stations.
- Masks required in all public indoor areas. Consider making masks available to guests. Guests may remove their masks for tasting, but server should wear a mask. Refer to [WorkSafeBC's guidance](#) on mask requirements
- Consider applying for [BC Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch temporary service area expansion](#) to facilitate tastings throughout the winery including outdoors.
- If any outside areas are tented, all walls and windows that may be opened in the tented area should remain open during tastings.
- Have contactless payment systems available for tasting fees and purchases. Encourage the use of tap payments and e-receipts where possible otherwise place receipts in a bag or box.
- Monitor number of customers on premises at one time to ensure physical-distancing requirements are maintained and to comply with provincial capacity restrictions.
- Limit group bookings to parties of six people or less. People in the same party do not have to be two metres apart.
- Post signage promoting two-metre physical distancing indicating the maximum number of guests in tasting rooms.

- Two-metre markers on floors for any areas that lineups may occur (e.g. washrooms, tasting stations).
- Offer curbside pickup and/or delivery service for your customers.

### CLEANING AND SANITIZATION

- Glassware to be used and cleaned in restaurant grade washers after each use OR disposable glassware.
- Sanitize customer-contact surfaces before and after each tasting, including seats, tables, menus and all other touchpoints including payment devices.

### HEALTH AND HYGIENE

- Sanitary place for guests to put their masks and gloves.
- [Proper use of masks.](#)
- Use tasting menus that are single use (disposable), cleanable between each tasting (laminated), online or posted on a whiteboard/chalkboard to avoid multiple contact points.
- Wines pre-poured where possible. Bottles should not touch guests' glass during pouring.
- Orders to be collected by retail employees to prevent guests from touching multiple surfaces.
- Individual disposable cups for spittoons.
- Increase ventilation for indoor spaces to allow for greater air turnover.
- Have a deep-cleaning response plan in place in the event an employee or visitor tests positive for COVID-19.



## RETAIL STORES

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Post signage promoting two-metre physical distancing indicating the maximum number of guests throughout the winery.
- Masks required in all public indoor areas. Consider making masks available to guests. Refer to [WorkSafeBC's guidance](#) on mask requirements.
- Assign a designated concierge or retail leads to manage customer flow and monitor two-metre physical distancing throughout the winery.
- Two-metre markers on floors for any areas that lineups may occur (e.g. cash desks, washrooms).
- Arrows directing the flow of traffic throughout the store (floor plans reconfigured where necessary).
- Plexiglass to be installed where necessary (e.g. cash and reception desks).
- Have contactless payment systems available. Encourage the use of tap payment and e-receipts where possible otherwise place receipts in a bag or box.

### CLEANING AND SANITIZATION

- Regular sanitization of frequently used surfaces.
- Frequent sanitization of washrooms, doors and credit/debit units.
- Washroom attendants throughout the day where possible.

### HEALTH AND HYGIENE

- Grouped employee scheduling to reduce the number of people exposed to each other.
- [Proper use of masks.](#)
- Increase ventilation for indoor spaces to allow for greater air turnover.
- Have a deep-cleaning response plan in place in the event an employee or visitor tests positive for COVID-19.



## PATIOS

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Reservations highly encouraged, with policies and procedures in place to manage walk-in guests.
- Masks required to and from patio seating. Refer to [WorkSafeBC's guidance](#) on mask requirements.
- Operating hours to allow for one team shift per day along with single role per employee per shift.
- Size of parties cannot exceed current public health restrictions. Remove tables to spread out guest seating areas and reassess floor plan to accommodate.
- Indicate outdoor tables cannot be moved together.
- Two-metre markers on floors for any areas that lineups may occur (e.g. washrooms, reservation desks, host stands).
- Plexiglass to be installed where necessary (e.g. walk-up bars).

### CLEANING AND SANITIZATION

- Thorough and regular sanitization of all touchpoints after use (tables, POS terminals, phones, desks, all flat and stainless surfaces, door plates, taps and other handles).
- Daily washroom attendants to continuously sanitize washrooms.
- Cutlery pre-packed, disposable and biodegradable.
- Glasses to be sanitized after every use.

### HEALTH AND HYGIENE

- Regular handwashing required for all employees.
- [Proper use of masks.](#)
- Menus will be posted at entrance and online. Use of physical menus will be disposable or laminated and wiped down between each use.
- Food will be served for dine-in on melamine plates that will be washed and sanitized after every use.
- Take-away food will be served in closed containers.
- Condiments will be served in individual ramekins with lids or in pre-packaged pouches.
- Have a deep-cleaning response plan in place in the event an employee or visitor tests positive for COVID-19.



## RESTAURANTS

Refer to WorkSafeBC and BC Restaurants and Foodservices Association (BCRFA) guidelines and recommendations:

[WorkSafeBC's guidelines for restaurants, cafés and pubs](#)

[BCRFA COVID-19 Resources](#)

## RESOURCES:

- BC Wine Industry Reopening Workshop | Thursday, May 14, 2020
- Tourism and Hospitality Best Practices Template | Food and Liquor Services
- COVID-19 survival guide for BC wineries: How to re-open your tasting room | Al Hudec
- Restaurants, cafés and pubs | WorkSafeBC
- Post-COVID Operations Protocols | Andrew Peller Limited
- California Winery Tasting Rooms Reopening Protocols | California Wine Institute
- Patio, service area expansions support safe reopening | Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch
- BC's Response to COVID-19 and BC's Restart | Government of British Columbia
- BC Residents' Public Perceptions: COVID-19 Travel and Tourism Reports | Destination British Columbia
- Manufacturers Guided Tours and Provisions | Brown Beverage Consulting
- Liquor Policy Manual | Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch
- Policy Directive 16-17 | Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch