



B.C. MEETINGS & EVENTS INDUSTRY WORKING GROUP

June 10, 2020

Re: Industry Best Practices Guidelines Initiative

Dear B.C. Meetings & Events Industry Partners,

COVID-19 has had tremendous impact on the Meetings and Events Industry. The primary purpose of our industry is to plan and deliver group experiences, and the global pandemic has frozen our collective ability to function.

To gather our industry together into a collective effort, to address the impact of this virus, and to develop a safe restart plan for medium and large group gatherings, a B.C. Meetings and Events Industry Working Group (BCMEWG) has been created as of May 15, 2020.

WHO ARE WE?

The Working Group constitutes a cross section of B.C. businesses from the Meetings & Events Industry, with consultation and input provided by industry leaders and stakeholders.

The initiative represents companies and independents who produce and provide services for meetings and events in British Columbia, including event production companies, meeting and event planners, conference planners, caterers, designers, furniture and product suppliers, builders (i.e. set design, construction, tenting/structure), A/V companies, logistics management companies, DMCs, etc.

FOCUS

The focus of the guidelines will be on meetings and events that are defined as “closed events,” meaning they are not open to the public, i.e. corporate meetings, incentives, conferences & events, (MICE), celebration galas, fundraisers, etc. We will not be tailoring to conventions, exhibitions, public events, concerts, festivals, or weddings at this time.



OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of the Working Group is to collaborate with industry to develop an effective restart plan for designing and executing meetings and events with safety and responsibility at the forefront, in adherence to government mandates that mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The secondary goal is to advocate collectively on behalf of our industry by streamlining our recovery efforts. We understand that one voice is stronger than many fragmented initiatives. The Metro-Vancouver Tourism & Hospitality Industry Response & Recovery Task Force, for example, was given a strong recommendation by Minister Beare's office to coordinate our efforts within our industry sectors in an organized fashion to avoid creating "white noise."

PROCESS

The Working Group is gathering information from as many sources as possible to draft a comprehensive set of COVID-19 Best Practices Guidelines for the B.C. Meetings & Events Industry. We propose that, once finalized, these best practices be adopted by the B.C. industry at large, distributed by B.C. affiliates/chapters of key industry organizations such as MMBC, MPI, ILEA, FVEPA and PCMA etc. These guidelines will serve to support the many diverse businesses that our industry thrives on by speaking with a unified voice and drafting common operating principles around which to align.

Moreover, the development and adoption of high-level standard guidelines by our industry will serve to support industry appeals to the provincial government to allow for group gatherings over 50 people. The appeal approach will be coordinated with other industry sectors (including hotel, venue, and exhibition sectors) working towards the same goal to support a phased reopening of Meetings and Events in our province. It will capitalize on other industry sectors who have made prior submissions to the provincial government such as the B.C. Restaurant & Food Services Association and B.C. Hotel Association, as well as on shared learnings.

NEXT STEPS:

The Working Group expects a first draft of the Best Practices document to be complete and ready for review by mid-July, 2020 and an appeal strategy designed by the end of July, 2020. This timing is strategic, to follow and align with the recent B.C. Hotel Association Best Practices submission in May, and an in-progress B.C. hotel industry led working group focused on lobbying government to increase the 50-person limit for in-house business meetings.

We recognize the need to act with a sense of urgency, while at the same time carefully adopting the province's current COVID-19 health and safety mandates, as well as WorkSafe BC regulations. We will share progress towards our goal as we proceed and invite input on proposed guidelines from others willing to step in to help bring together and support our industry.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Joanne Burns Millar, CEO - **Pacific Destination Services (PDS)**

Jennifer Burton DMCP, President - **Pacific Destination Services (PDS)**

Matthew Coyne, President - **Cantrav**

Matthew Hussack, Vice President, Production - **Proshow Audiovisual**

Alexis Kereluk, Partner - **ConnectSeven Group**

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Paul Runnals, Vice President, Production & Technical - **Brand Live**

James Thornley, President - **The Peake of Catering**

WORKING GROUP ADVISORS

Dave Gazley, Vice President – **Tourism Vancouver**

Karen Goodwin, VP Destination & Market Development – **Tourism Whistler**

Greg Hazlewood, CMP, Director Conference Services & Catering – **The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver**

Marion Harper Treskin, Dual Property GM – **JW Marriott Parq Vancouver & the DOUGLAS**

Ingrid Jarrett, President & CEO – **B.C. Hotel Association**

Craig Lehto, General Manager - **Vancouver Convention Centre**

Stephen Melville, Sales Manager – **Sun Peaks Grand Hotel & Conference Centre**

Sincerely,

BC Meetings & Events Industry Working Group

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