

# COVID-19 Best Practices 2021

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## Overview

### *Purpose*

This document outlines Bluewater Adventures' Best Practices as governments and health officials determine when to reopen tourism in British Columbia. It establishes BWA's approach to minimizing Covid-19 exposure risks of crew, guests, and coastal communities. Furthermore, the aim of this document is to promote health and safety throughout the entire travel process from start to finish.

### **BLUEWATER ADVENTURES**

Bluewater Adventures offers "once in a lifetime" wildlife and coastal First Nations cultural experiences. Our multi-day, live aboard trips explore the remote wilderness of coastal British Columbia and Southeast Alaska. Traveling aboard our live-aboard expedition yachts we keep watch for whales and other marine mammals, coastal birds and bears, old-growth forests, and ancient native villages.

Experienced biologists, renowned resource people and our skilled crew engage guests on these inspirational journeys. With the west coast as our specialty, we focus on wildlife behaviour, ecology, sustainability and local history. A maximum group size of 12 guests ensures quality, informality and a "hands-on" experience for all aboard.

Since 1974, Bluewater Adventures' reputation has brought respected groups and people from around the world. Bluewater Adventures' trips adhere to the principles of ecotourism. Bluewater is a supporter of several local conservation and research groups. Bluewater invests in local communities and is committed to minimizing our operational footprint.

### *Our Vessels*

The Bluewater Adventures fleet is made up of 3, locally built, motor-sailors that are all certified by the Canadian Ministry of Transportation.

Island Roamer – A 68' ketch, launched in 1993, has 6 guest cabins and 3 shared heads. Two forward cabins are quarters for Crew, guest naturalists or group leaders. The spacious and airy wheelhouse is enclosed by canvass. There is plenty of space on deck to keep a look out for wildlife while underway.

Island Odyssey – A 68' ketch built in 1984, Island Odyssey was the second vessel to join the Bluewater fleet. In 2003, she was completely refit from a private luxury yacht to an expedition vessel with the same cabin and head configuration as Island Roamer.

Island Solitude – Launched in the spring of 2018, this 82' sloop also accommodates 12 guests in 6 cabins with each featuring an ensuite bathroom with toilet, sink and hot shower. The large wheelhouse and aft cockpit supply ample seating for all guests and Crew. This modern hull design was sought to improve sailing performance and fuel efficiency.

# Mitigation Protocols Promoting Health and Safety During COVID-19

Operating in remote areas along the British Columbia Coast for over 45 years, Bluewater Adventures puts health and safety first. All Crew are Transport Canada certified and safety training is at the forefront of our operations.

## General Operating Guidelines

### *EMPLOYEE POLICIES*

Employees Must:

- Practice physical distancing by working more than 2 metres (6 feet) apart from co-workers whenever possible. If distancing is not possible, Crew will don a face covering.
- Continue to follow all other safe work procedures. If it is unsafe to work, speak with the Captain
- Stay home if they are sick or might be sick. Use the BC Ministry of Health for self-assessment: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en> and advise the office immediately.
- Avoid touching their face
- Wash their hands before eating or drinking, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, after handling cash or credit cards, after touching common items, after each delivery if contact was made, and at the end of their shift. Remove jewellery while washing

### Workplace Wellness/Sick Leave Policy

Employers must ensure they have clear policies (*Sample policies can be included*) around that address the following:

- Expectations from employees when they report to work (e.g. Pre-screening questionnaire, washing hands, wearing PPE, undergoing wellness assessment)
- What employees do when they feel sick (e.g. reporting procedures)
- Sick leave entitlement

### *GUEST COMMUNICATION*

All guests will be contacted in the days leading up to their Bluewater Adventures trip. It will be the responsibility of our guests to

#### 1. Passenger & Crew Pre-Trip Screenings Process:

All guests and crew are now required to go through a Pre-Trip Screening process prior their trip. Recognize that access to medical assistance aboard our trips is extremely limited, so it is imperative guests and crew answer all pre-screening questions truthfully for the health and safety of all persons onboard.

Leading up to trip departure dates, our office will contact guests, travel trade partners and crew to ask a selection of pre-trip questions in the timeline indicated:

**a) Initial check in from Bluewater Adventures - 45 days prior to trip departure date:**

Bluewater Adventures will contact all guests, travel trade partners and crew to inform whether their upcoming trip is confirmed to operate or not. At this time, BWA will advise of our Pre-Boarding Check-In & Orientations policies as well as our Measures to Reduce COVID-19 Transmission Risk in the weeks leading up to your trip (see Section 3).

**Booking agents** will be responsible for facilitating the Pre-Trip Screening Process in full (sections a – d) with their clients booked on BWA trips.

- BWA has updated our Liability Release forms to include a new wording expressly detailing the risks of infectious diseases. These will be distributed to all booking agents and guests for guests to complete once their trip has been confirmed.
- Guests will consent to the possible risks imposed by COVID-19 and travel.
- Guest travel plans and health will be shared with the BWA crew in advance of their trip.
- Guest single occupancy policy: Bluewater will plan not to have single travellers who don't know each other share a cabin to a maximum of 2 solo guests per departure
- Guests will be advised of the requirement to arrange for COVID-19 testing at most 5 days (timing subject to change) prior to travel and provide the results showing a clear bill of health to BWA prior to boarding our vessels. There will also be a second test conducted immediately prior to boarding utilizing rapid testing technology approved by Health Canada and conducted by a health care worker (Details TBD as the availability of rapid testing increases).

**b) Secondary check in from Bluewater Adventures – 14 days prior to trip departure date:**

- Guests and crew will be required to complete a COVID-19 Risk Assessment Questionnaire to which one must answer truthfully and submit to the Bluewater Adventures office.
- If the state of your health changes between submitting this assessment and the start of your travels, please contact the BWA office immediately. If you feel unwell at any time during this period, we ask that you do not join the trip.
- Guests should share their plan for getting a Covid-19 test prior to travel.

**c) Bluewater Adventures will ask all guests and Crew to take precautions prior to joining a trip:**

- BWA will advise all guests and crew to start taking precautionary measures and be socially responsible to minimize their exposure to COVID-19 starting 14 days prior to your trip departure date.
- If Covid-19 test results have not been received from the guest yet enquire about the status of the test and remind them that a negative test result within 5 days of travel is required for boarding. (subject to change)
- BWA has an obligation to provide a safe environment for all and will be asking guests and crew to voluntarily take extra safety measures to reduce their exposure to COVID-19 for 14 days leading up to their trip departure date. We feel this is a reasonable request to protect our guests and crew from a potential outbreak onboard.

**d) The Bluewater Adventures office will follow up with all guests 24 – 48 hours prior to travel:**

As a follow up medical check in leading up to the trip, BWA will contact all guests prior to travel to ensure that there have been no changes in health. Bluewater Crew are advised to prevent any person displaying a fever during pre-boarding check-in from joining the trip.

**e) Bluewater Adventures requests that any guests who begin to show symptoms of COVID-19 following their trip, to contact the Bluewater office immediately.**

## **2. Pre-boarding Check-In & Orientation by BWA Crew:**

Prior to boarding our vessels, guests and crew will be required to undergo the following Pre-Boarding Check-In administered by BWA crew:

### **Pre-Boarding Check-In:**

Prior to boarding, the incoming guests and crew will be required to repeat the COVID-19 Risk Assessment Questionnaire (the same questionnaire used during the pre-screening process) to which all guests must answer truthfully. All guests and crew will have their temperature taken via a non-contact thermometer.

No person, guest or crew, will be permitted to board the vessel if:

- They are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
- Their Pre-Boarding BWA Risk Assessment Questionnaire indicates they may have COVID-19.
- Consultation with a Local Health Authority or Health Line (811) and the BWA office concludes that they may have COVID-19.
- They have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for or is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- They have been refused travel in the past 14 days due to a medical reason related to COVID-19 OR are subject to a provincial or local public health order.

### **Safety and Vessel Orientation:**

- Vessel captains will provide a detailed guest and crew orientation.
- In addition to going over onboard safety protocols, cabin/head orientations, and general health and hygiene onboard, the Captain will inform all guests and crew of further Measures to Reduce COVID-19 Transmission Risk (Section 3).
- Crew will distribute hand sanitizer to guests and other crew prior to boarding.

## **3. Measures to Reduce COVID-19 Transmission Risk - Onboard:**

Although onboard cleanliness is a top priority for the health and safety of crew and guests, BWA must adhere to extra precautionary measures towards our sanitization standards specific to the risk mitigation of COVID-19. We have consulted external guidance from health authorities such as the World

Health Organization, the BC Center for Disease Control, BC Ministry of Health, links for further reading are listed at the end of this document

It is understood that despite any guest or crew member having received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, COVID-19 protocols will continue to be observed. Face coverings must be worn, frequent handwashing is encouraged, and physical distancing measures will continue.

## ***GENERAL INFORMATION – Sanitation and Hygiene***

Elevated hygiene and sanitation practices will be expected to be upheld by all aboard.

- Cloth face coverings (3 per person) will be added to the suggested BWA packing list
- Daily Check-Ins with guests and Crew/ daily temperature taking with electronic thermometer
- Physical Distancing will be maintained whenever possible. Guests and Crew will don fabric face coverings when sufficient distancing is not possible and in common spaces down below in salon, library and hallway to cabin.
- Bluewater Adventures will maintain constant ventilation through the vessel throughout the day whenever possible
- Personal Care & Hygiene will be upheld, elevating the importance of proper hand washing before eating or drinking, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, and before leaving the worksite. Remove jewellery while washing. Avoid touching their face.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be situated throughout the vessels. In the wheelhouse, salon, shore bag and near food service areas.
- Increase disinfection of all hard surfaces using appropriate cleaners. If household or commercial disinfectant cleaning products are not available, hard surfaces can be disinfected using a mixture of 5 mL of bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and 250 mL of water. Make sure the solution is in contact with the surface for 1 minute.
- Clean salon, wheelhouse, outside seating areas, and workspaces, at least once per day, and more often for high-traffic areas and contact surfaces. Focus on frequently touched and
- shared surfaces such as, doors, handles, handrails, light switches, shelves, countertops, drawers, keyboards and mice, touch screens, pens, tools, phones, radios, chairs, and kitchen equipment.
- Clean any shared equipment, helm, communication devices, demonstration items, binoculars, phones, or touch screens with alcohol or disinfectant wipes between users.
- Shared heads will be cleaned frequently and will be stocked with full soap dispensers, paper towels, disinfecting wipes and lined waste containers (to be emptied frequently). Crew will be provided with protective equipment required to safely use cleaning equipment.
- Crew and passengers will be reminded to practice good hygiene frequently, including coughing/sneezing into your elbow or a tissue, disposing of tissue and washing hands.
- Signage referring to proper hygiene will be posted in easily seen areas through the vessel.
- Dispose of used tissues, wipes, gloves, and other cleaning materials in a plastic lined waste container.

### **Daily Check-Ins:**

A designated crew member will conduct daily, one-on-one verbal check-ins and temperature takings with all passengers and crew. Similar to the process listed above in the Pre-Boarding Check-In section. Crew will record this information in the onboard Health Logbook. If guests or crew are not feeling well, inform the crew immediately and then follow the direction of the BWA crew.

### **Physical Distancing:**

The BCCDC advises to maintain a physical distance of 2metres from others at all times.

2 metres physical distancing should be maintained whenever possible - in the vessel, out on deck, when onshore wildlife viewing, etc. When physical distancing is not possible, a cloth face covering must be worn.

### **When 2 metre, physical distancing cannot be maintained:**

#### *Face Masks/ Coverings:*

- Everyone will wear protective face coverings.
- Signage for Proper Face Covering Requirements will be posted in all cabins and common areas.
- Guests will be required to bring their own protective face coverings sufficient for the duration of the trip. A minimum of 3 cloth masks will allow for hand washing throughout the trip.
- Safety Orientation & Evacuation Drills:
  - The general BWA Safety Orientation will take outside if possible or in the wheelhouse and will be conducted twice, if necessary, to accommodate physical distancing.
  - Evacuation drills will be delivered verbally. Crew will demonstrate the proper donning of lifejackets as well as assign each guest their own personal flotation device at the orientation.
  - Evacuation scenarios, fire drills, fire fighting equipment, etc. will all be reviewed in discussion.

#### *Cabin & Head Orientation:*

- Cabin & Head Orientations will now take place as an extended part of the general Safety Orientation.
- Single occupancy policy: Bluewater will plan not to have solo travellers who do not know each other share a cabin.
- BWA will create infographic signage or video of proper head use and hand washing which will be referenced at this part in the verbal orientation.
- Infographic signage of proper head use and hand washing techniques will be printed and posted in each head.
- Crew will instruct guests to open all cabin portholes when not underway in order to create ventilation throughout the ship.

#### *Mealtimes:*

- All meals will be individually plated and served by BWA Crew. For safety reasons, the sharing of food is not permitted.
- BWA will encourage people to eat outside while maintaining physical distancing. When eating inside, guests will sit in designated seating areas - Seating maps will be posted for reference.
- Crew will be responsible for serving coffee & tea, wine.

- At the end of each meal, each person is responsible for discarding their food waste and placing dishware in a bleach water solution.
- Proper dishware washing protocols and signage as per Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety guidelines.
- Guests will not be permitted to enter the galley

*Zodiacs:*

- To safely support guests getting in and out of the zodiacs, crew will provide hand sanitizer to all guests prior to loading and unloading zodiacs. Face coverings will be worn. Crew will continue to need to assist guests in and out of boats.
- 1m minimum distance between guests in zodiacs will be encouraged.

#### 4. Emergency Response Practices if COVID-19 Outbreak Occurs Onboard:

Should a guest or crew start to show possible symptoms of COVID-19 while aboard:

- Inform the Crew and Captain immediately. COVID-19 symptoms include:
  - \* Shortness of breath / difficulty breathing
  - \* Undue Fatigue / drowsiness
  - \* Loss of taste and smell
  - \* Cough, chest congestion
  - \* Sore throat, headache, muscle aches and pain
  - \* Fever (38 degrees or higher)
  - \* Diarrhea

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses including the flu and common cold. Symptoms may vary from person to person. Some people may experience mild symptoms, while others have more severe symptoms.

Sometimes people with COVID-19 have mild illness, but their symptoms may suddenly worsen in a few days. People infected with COVID-19 may also experience gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhea, nausea and vomiting a few days after the onset of the above symptoms. If you only have gastrointestinal symptoms you may not have COVID-19.

To learn more about symptoms of COVID-19, visit the [BC Centre for Disease Control's Symptoms](#) page.

The guest or crew will be instructed to **immediately isolate themselves** in their cabin or a bow cabin, don a face mask, and remain isolated until further medical advice is received.

- On Island Roamer and Island Odyssey, one of the heads will be designated for the isolated individual (as COVID-19 is also transmitted via feces). Clear signage is needed to ensure no one else uses that head. Aboard Island Solitude, each cabin has a private head.
- The skipper will contact the appropriate **Local Health Authority** or, in some geographic area's **Telehealth Services** (Healthlink service is available in BC by dialing 811) or other designated health professional and consult how to proceed.
- It is advised that all non-British Columbia Residents purchase evacuation insurance should they become ill and require immediate medical attention. British Columbia residents are covered under the BC Medical Services Plan and evacuation insurance is not required.

## ***ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING***

### **Daily Cleaning Protocols and Disinfecting:**

BWA will be launching new Cleaning Protocols with enhanced procedures and guidance on how to clean our vessels with specific information on COVID-19 prevention, such as the use of personal protective equipment, like masks and gloves for crew or cleaners, as well as disinfectants that are approved by regulatory authorities.

- i) BWA will increase the frequency of sanitizing key public spaces and frequently touched surfaces with a virus-killing formula suggested by Health Canada
- ii) Frequently touched surfaces include: handrails, handles, steering wheel, tables, bunk-side tables, countertops, workstations, light switches, porthole latches, electronic equipment such as phones, camera's, GPS, radar, marine radio's, etc. Key public spaces include: the wheelhouse, salon, and Island Roamer and Island Odyssey heads will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently.
- iii) BWA will encourage guests to disinfect heads after every use.
- iv) Kayaks and kayak paddles: BWA will encourage guests to use hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to clean kayak paddles and kayak pre/post use.
- vi) Crew will protect themselves by wearing gloves when cleaning, extra handwashing, etc.

## *TRAVELING TO AND FROM YOUR TRIP WITH BLUEWATER ADVENTURES:*

Before traveling to and from your trip with BWA, please be advised of the most up-to-date travel advice before you depart. Please be aware of possible travel cancellations outside of BWA. The Bluewater office will be monitoring regular public travel routes often used by guests and crew and will try to advise on travel arrangements when possible.

BWA will advise all guests and Crew to arrange **expedited travel** planning on their way to their trip with us. Expedited travel is the concept of traveling directly from the guest or crew member's home to the vessel in the most efficient manner with the least possible stops or overnights. If people want to plan other activities as part of their holiday, please do so after your trip with BWA.

### Useful Links:

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/symptoms-covid-19>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

<http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>