

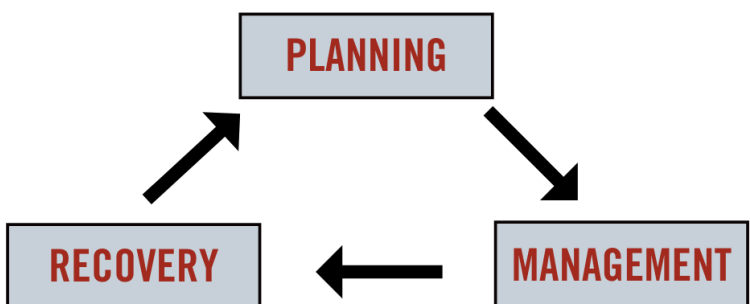
# REVELSTOKE.

## TOURISM TALKS

### Emergency Response and Planning in Tourism

With the growing impact of COVID-19, everyone in tourism is talking about emergency response. BC has already experienced its share of tourism impacting emergencies. Over the last few years, we've all become too familiar with the devastating effects of wildfires on our province. In 2019, the Sea to Sky Gondola cable cutting had a huge impact on Squamish's economy. Emergency response and preparedness is imperative in the tourism industry. There are three key stages to consideration for the tourism industry: Preparation, Management, and Recovery. Anticipating an emergency is difficult; different situations will affect our community in different ways.

During a crisis, we need to ensure that our residents and visitors are safe, informed, and adequately provided for. During the recovery phase, we need to mitigate the harmful economic impacts on our tourism industry resulting from the crisis.



In any emergency, the Visitor Services team has an “Emergency Communications Plan” which relies on guidance from Destination BC (DBC), who ultimately provide the directives for managing tourism in times of crisis. Emergency Management BC also provides resources for responding and managing crises.

Managing a crisis while its underway begins at a local level, with guidance and directives from provincial authorities. This involves communicating with visitors and residents, relaying and acting on messaging from DBC and other government authorities, and acting in tandem with the City of Revelstoke, the Chamber of Commerce, and other local organizations.

When trying to mitigate the economic impact of these events, it's essential that affected areas be given enough time to recover. However, tourism dollars can help inject money into regions that are suffering. There are interesting examples of campaigns that have been initiated after disasters. For example, following the 2019-2020 bushfires, Australia initiated its “Holiday Here This Year” campaign, encouraging Australians to support communities by taking their vacations domestically and spending their money in affected areas. California, after its devastating wildfires and mudslides, started “Share the Love” campaign. After a slew of further wildfires, Visit California worked with neighbouring states to create a travel facts website, and escalated its Share the Love campaign. These campaigns appeal to people's altruistic desires and recognize that positive messaging alone won't rehabilitate the tourism industry. Following our heavy fire seasons in 2017 and 2018, Destination BC implemented a wildfire recovery fund for marketing efforts. Tourism Revelstoke accessed this fund for an episode of the tv program “Epic Trails”.

Following the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic, DBC has recognized that marketing to overseas markets is not money well spent and has reallocated funding to support local messaging on short haul drive markets (AB, BC). We expect that travelers will be reluctant to head overseas, even when travel restrictions are lifted, and hope to be able to guide recovery in our city's tourism economy as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Like our other key industries in BC, we can expect instability from time to time. It's essential that we are nimble, able to change tack, and respond to situations as they arise.