

Social Media Toolkit

A GUIDE TO AMPLIFYING YOUR BUSINESS CONTENT

Experience Comox Valley actively markets the Comox Valley region and shares “know before you go” messaging with current and prospective travellers. Through these various channels, we’re able to encourage travellers to consider activities and tours, to travel with safety in mind, and to visit new areas that are ready to welcome them.

Our social media channels are powered by user-generated content; we look at what businesses and travellers are currently posting and request permission to share these images. This means we’re always on the lookout for images and videos that will help us meet the mission of encouraging travel responsibly. As a business, you can help support the tourism industry in your area and help us amplify the offerings you have for the guests.

This guide serves to help you best amplify that content by explaining some of the ins and outs of the tools we use, while also highlighting what we look for in user-generated content.

The Basics

- Find us on Instagram (IG) and Facebook:
 - [@TourismComoxValley](#) and [/ExperienceComoxValley](#) on FB
 - [@TourismVancouverIsland](#) on IG and [/VancouverIsland.travel](#) on FB
- A hashtag helps consumers easily find content:
 - #ExperienceComoxValley
 - #ExperienceVancouverIsland

How We Source Content:

Social media is a rapidly evolving landscape of content, and it can be hard to see everything everyone is posting, so Experience Comox Valley uses a tool called CrowdRiff to pull in images and videos that are posted using specific hashtags or @ mentions.

We pull content that uses #ExperienceComoxValley and our former hashtag #DiscoverComoxValley, as well as posts that have an “@mention” of our account in the post itself.

[Here's a guide to tagging on IG.](#)

If you'd like to share even more with us (your posts, your stories, and photos that you are tagged in), you can Connect your IG account to our CrowdRiff platform. [Here is the link to start the process](#) and [here is a resource to learn more about the tool.](#)

NOTE: *We can only source images from accounts and pages that are public. If your IG account is private, we aren't able to pull this content in and share it with our followers. If you'd like to keep your account private, you can send us content directly via email. We recommend that businesses have an Instagram business account and a Facebook page for the widest distribution of your business offerings.*

TIP: *Remember to make your social media accounts visible to travellers. On your website, you should be linking to each of your accounts, so it's easy to find your channels.*

Need a hand setting up your IG or Facebook page? [Register for Tourism Vancouver Island's tourism resiliency program](#) and a digital expert can help you get started.

SPECIALS & EVENTS

If you're about to share a special, like a sale, are hosting an event, have started a new business, or have a new blog post out, let us know! We'd love to share it and spread the word. You can tag us, or feel free to email us at marketing@experiencecomoxvalley.ca.

ABOUT THE BRAND

Experience Comox Valley follows the [Destination BC Brand guidelines](#), which [you can learn more about](#) in their learning portal. Some general rules to follow when taking photos that you'd like us to share are:

- Avoid over-editing images
- Videos are socially optimized (vertical/square orientation, designed for sound off, attention-grabbing, short)
- Music rights are in place for videos featuring music
- Watermarks aren't featured on photos
- Marketing-speak (clichéd words and phrases) is avoided or used sparingly
- Content is factually correct and free of grammar and spelling errors
- Content is descriptive, factual and specific (brand journalism vs. content marketing)

SAFETY & RESPONSIBILITY CHECKLIST

Experience Comox Valley and Tourism Vancouver Island work with Destination BC, as well as other organizations like the Marine Education and Research Society and Adventure Smart BC, to craft guidelines around portraying the experiences to travellers with safety and sustainability in mind.

We only share content that adheres to the following safety and responsibility best practices:

- Lifejackets and PFDs are visible on all persons in a vessel on the water (paddleboard, canoe, kayak, boat, etc.). Per Transport Canada's safe boating guidelines, ensure the people in the images are wearing the correct PFD for their age
- Skiers and snowmobilers are wearing backpacks if they are in a backcountry area
- Skiers, snowmobilers, and bikers are wearing helmets
- No public drinking is visible and there is no evidence of public drinking
- Dogs are in areas where dogs are permitted (Provincial, National, and public parks)
- Tents are in a legal camping area
- People are in a legal hiking area and on designated hiking/walking trails
- Campfires are in a legal fire area and there is no fire ban when sharing or promoting content in real-time
- Does not feature unsafe activities (i.e. backflips off rocks or cliffs)
- Does not feature illegal activities
- If the content is shot with a drone, the content captured is in a legal area for shooting with drone and was captured with all proper permissions and licences
- It is an actual place/experience a traveller to BC could go to/have
- Wildlife is respected (respectful distance, no human interactions, not being fed)
- Seasonal and geographic dispersion are considered; lesser-known areas are featured

Wildlife Photography Dos & Don'ts:

- Don't promote imagery that shows a vessel in perceived proximity to marine animals, nor with the engines running.
- Don't share content of illegal behaviour and/or obtained by illegal behaviour (feeding, touching, swimming with, moving, disrupting, etc.).
- Use experts to identify species or behaviour. Don't make assumptions.
- Don't share posts of marine mammals surprise appearing near vessels, including kayaks, SUPs, etc.
- Don't share harmful practices to the environment (e.g. hands in tidal pools).
- Do share responsible wildlife viewing examples and educate on the best practices
- Only share drone photography of marine mammals when acquired by a licensed research professional, and include how the image was acquired in the post information.
- Do share the unique experiences of Vancouver Island: the many species, the natural setting, the importance of research and conservation, and the wild.
- Do share conservation and research efforts.
- Do showcase a variety of species and the richness of the whole ecosystem.
- Do promote sustainable practices like reducing fossil fuel use, noise, waste and other resources.
- Do share how a photographer acquired a photo (from a boat, from a distance, with a zoom lens).
- Do share how a photo was edited to focus on the wildlife.
- Do share photos of guests wearing lifejackets and PFDs.
- Do follow the Keep Them Wet guidelines for fishing.

As representatives of the tourism industry, it's our responsibility to adhere to a set of guidelines around brand and safety. Following these guidelines allows us to set expectations with travellers for what type of experience they will have and how they can contribute positively to the community while they are here.



FURTHER READING

- [Sustainable Social Media: Managing Visitation to our Natural Places](#)
- [Destination BC Partner Content Checklist](#)
- [ITAC Brand Guidelines](#)