

PIGEON FORGE

T E N N E S S E E

Department of Tourism

COVID-19 Response

LOCAL BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE (UPDATE)

JULY 2020

A photograph of a man and a woman from behind, embracing each other and looking out over a vast mountain range under a clear blue sky. The woman is wearing a denim vest over a light-colored top and white shorts. The man is wearing a grey t-shirt and khaki shorts. The background shows rolling green mountains and a clear sky.

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Current Situation

SITUATION ANALYSIS

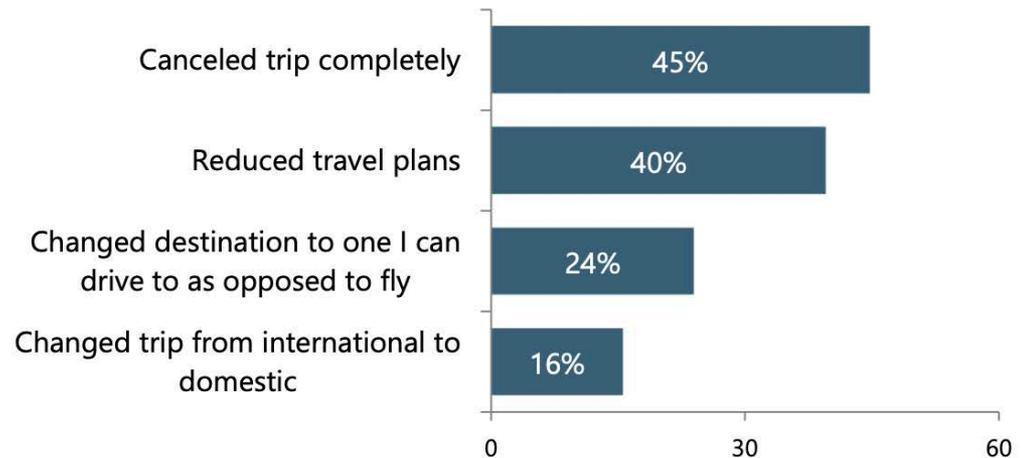
- This deck is intended to be a toolkit that your business may utilize to help you address hesitations that visitors may have before deciding to visit our beautiful city of Pigeon Forge.
- **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS TOOLKIT IS UPDATED AS OF JULY, 2020.**
- Research done during the COVID-19 period has identified the impact on the tourism industry, the potential for future travel, and that safety and cleanliness are primary concerns for potential travelers.
- Travelers continue to want to know that the lodging properties, restaurants, theaters and attractions that they visit are clean and safe. To help address those needs, we have organized resources, suggestions and optional marketing communications that you may use in your marketing channels.
- Our goal with this information is to help reduce concerns among potential Pigeon Forge visitors. In order to reinforce that, we do ask for your help by ensuring that the information you share is honest and accurate.

CONSUMER RESEARCH IN TRAVEL

U.S. travelers continue to indicate they're changing travel plans because of the coronavirus pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on travel had been declining slowly from a peak of 85% on April 8 but remains at levels signifying that widespread disruption of travel persists throughout the U.S. Recent weeks have seen a second spike in the level of concern from potential travelers



76%
of travelers planning to travel in the next six months will change their travel plans due to coronavirus

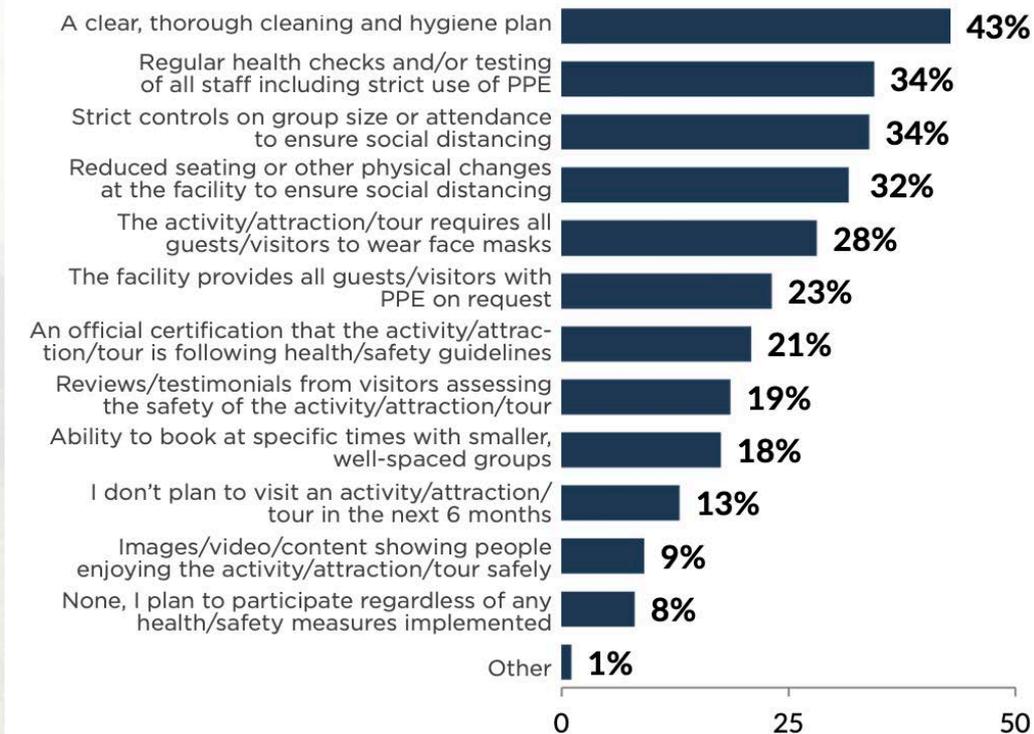


Base: Coronavirus Changed Travel Plans

CONSUMER RESEARCH IN TRAVEL

Visitors' perceptions about health and safety is critical to them when considering a destination, attraction, activities or tours. When asked about the procedures and precautions that are most likely to make them feel safe and more likely to visit, travelers are most likely to support tourism businesses that demonstrate a clear, thorough cleaning and hygiene plan.

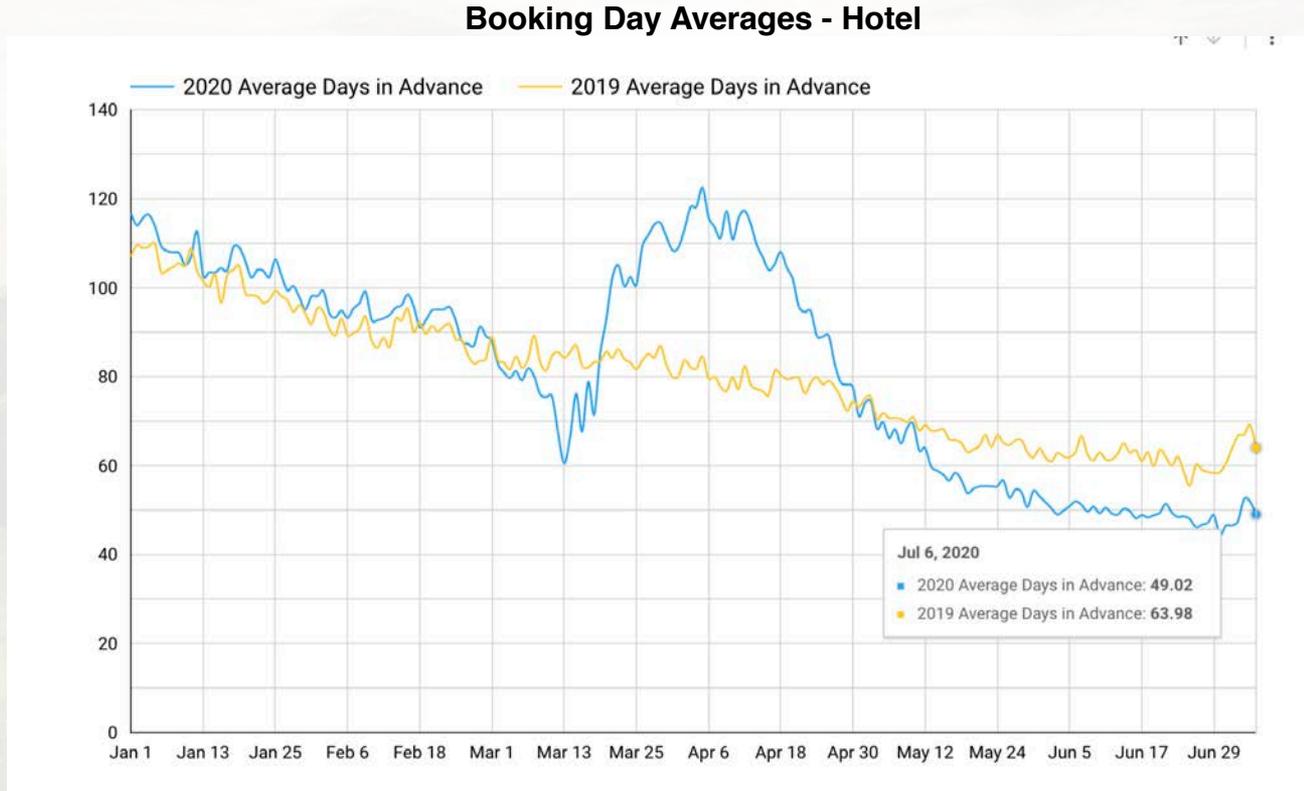
Importance of Safety Protocols at Tourist Attractions & Activities



Source: Longwoods International and analysis by Miles Media - Travel Sentiment Study: Wave 14 (June 23, 2020)

CONSUMER RESEARCH IN TRAVEL

- As people have begun to plan for upcoming travel, data suggests people are shortening their planning window
- While most decisions are still not 'last minute,' the overall planning cycle is currently over 13 days shorter than 2019.



Source: *simpleview: Business Intelligence Team*

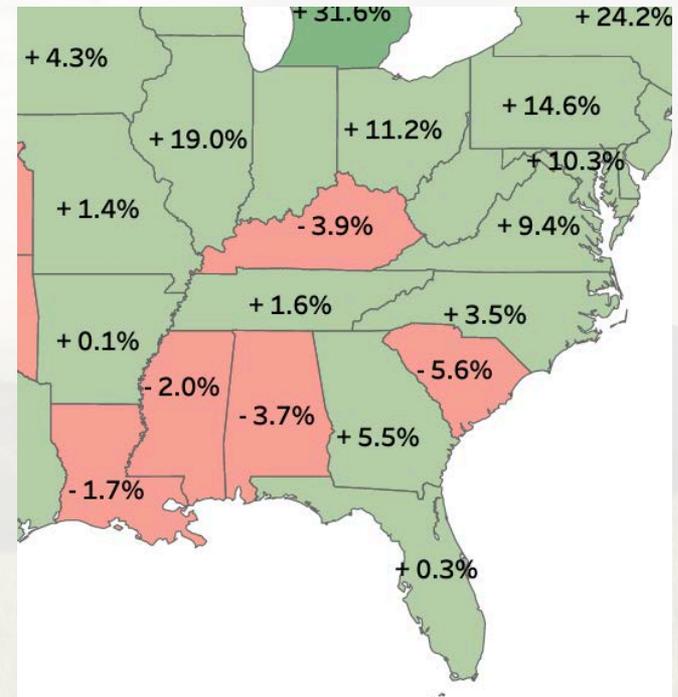
CONSUMER RESEARCH IN TRAVEL

GPS data shows consumers are beginning to travel again:

- Research tracking consumer vehicle trips of 50+ miles showed double-digit increases during Memorial Day Weekend over the week prior across many states.
- In general, this research has shown weekend travel has increased since mid-May.
- Overall vehicle trips of 50+ miles was up 11.7% on Saturday, July 4 versus Saturday, June 27

Regional Travel Index (Trips of 50+ Miles)

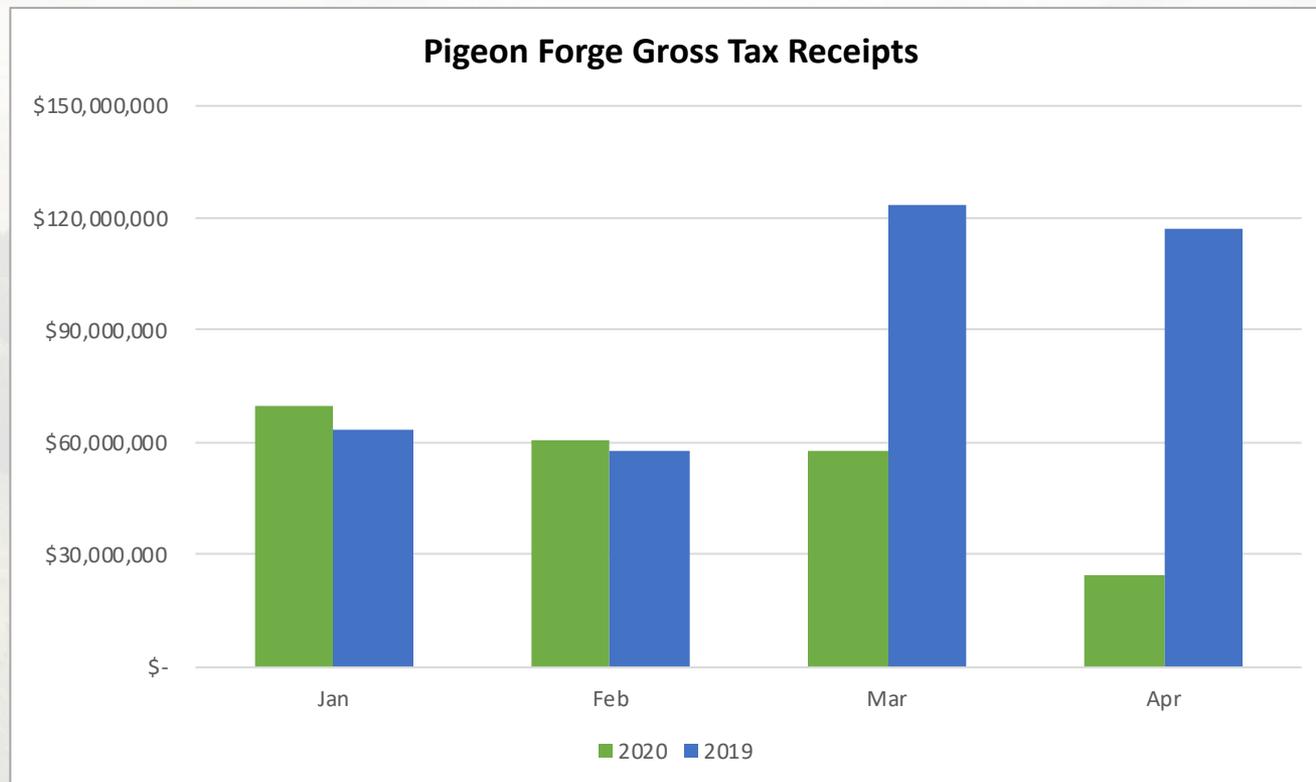
Week ending July 4 (Week-Over-Week)



Source: The Arrivalist, 7/6/20

COVID-19 CONTINUED IMPACT ON TOURISM

- Pigeon Forge mirrors those same national results as a result of Tennessee's stay-at-home orders and similar orders enacted in neighboring states and feeder markets.
- The Tennessee stay-at-home order was lifted on May 1, allowing businesses in Pigeon Forge and other municipalities in the state to begin to open.



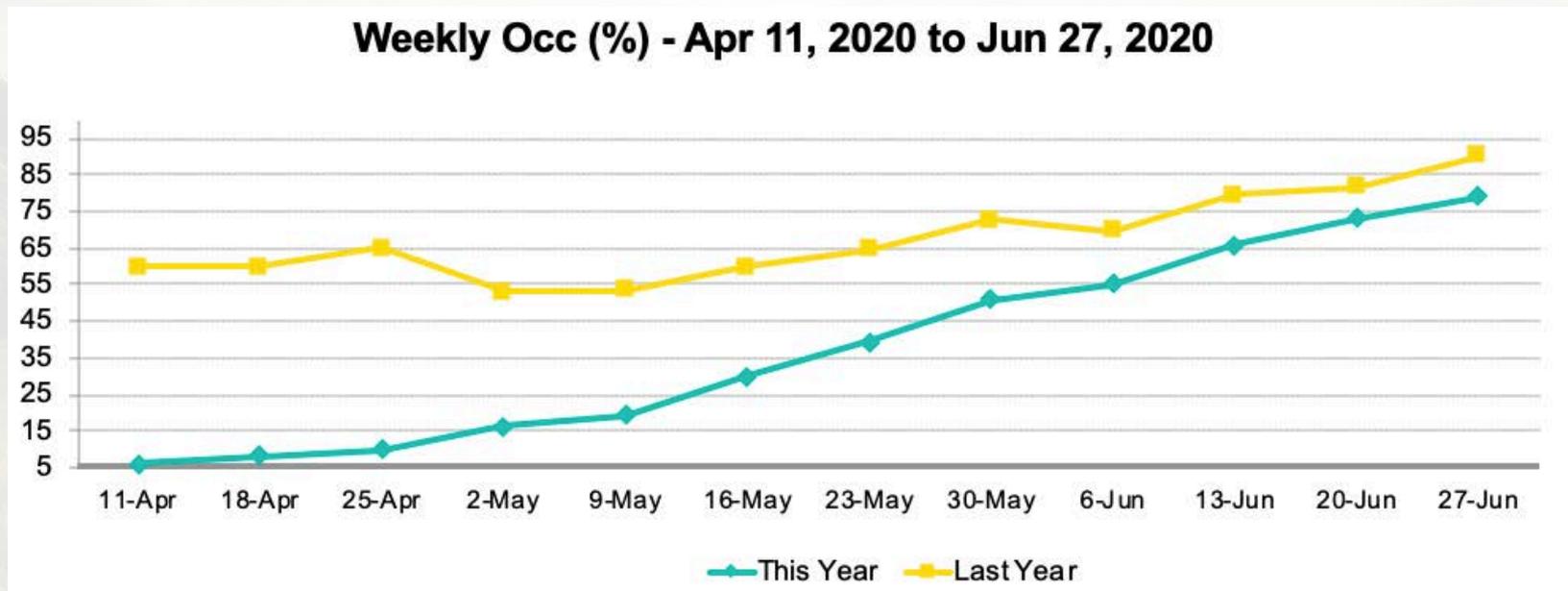
COVID-19 CONTINUED IMPACT ON TOURISM

While down, Pigeon Forge hotel occupancy rates are trending better than the U.S. average.

Occupancy rates for the week ending June 27:

- United States: 46.2% (-38.7% YOY)
- Pigeon Forge: 78.9% (-12.3% YOY)

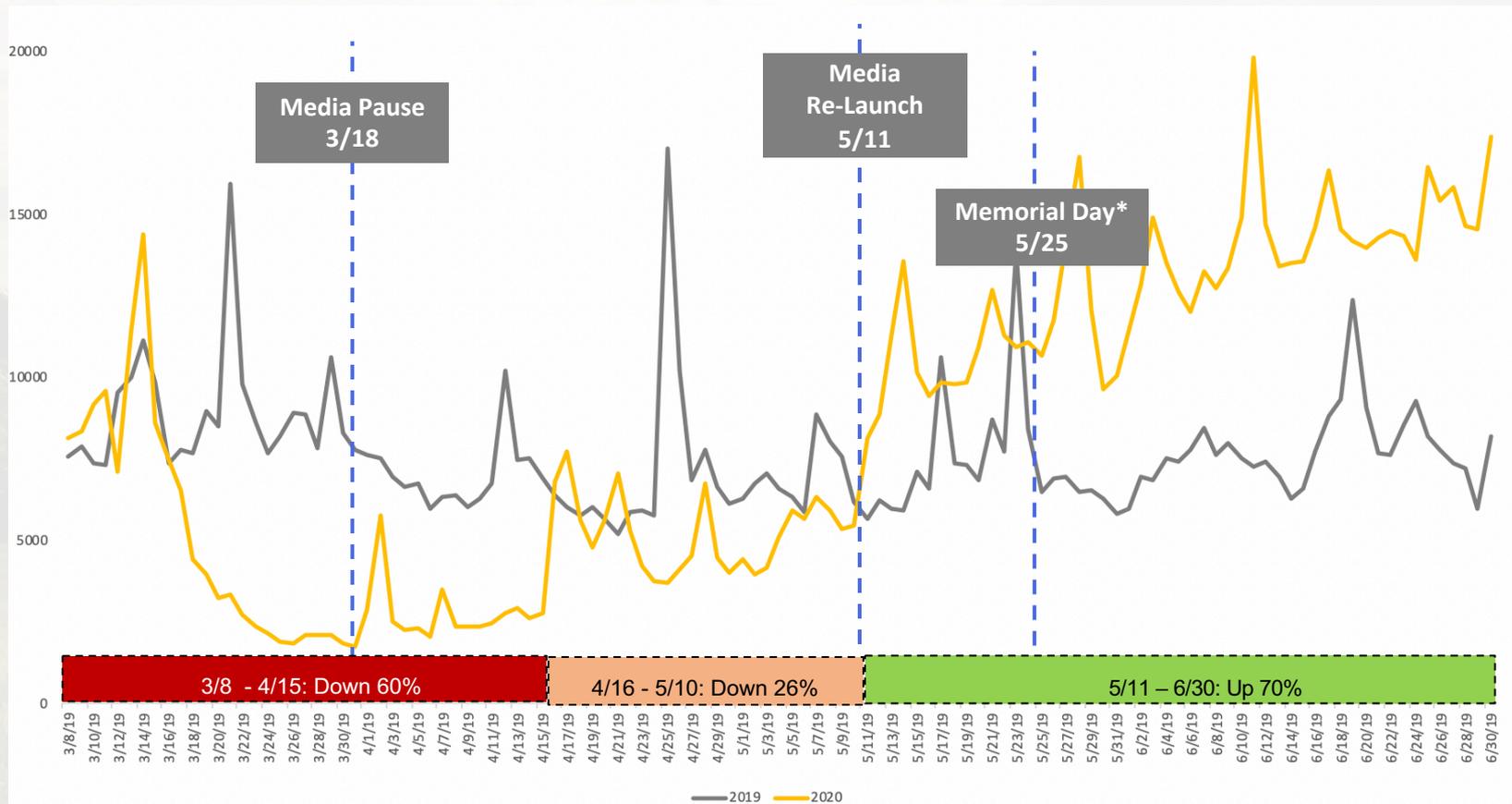
Saturday, June 27 Pigeon Forge Occ. 97.8% (+0.3 YOY)



Source: STR Lodging Reports, United States and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

MyPigeonForge.com WEBSITE TRAFFIC

Website traffic has been strong compared to aggregate DMO traffic since the initially impact of COVID-19 began to be felt. As media re-launched our increased summer media budget is helping drive very strong and consistent daily traffic.



CURRENT TOURISM INDICATORS

1.

Indicators are travel consideration and planning will continue to strengthen in the coming months if conditions continue to improve. However, the situation both locally and in our key feeder markets will remain fluid

2.

Pigeon Forge continues to work hard to remain top of mind for consumers as we navigate the evolving guidelines and travel advisories. While local business revenue remains down YoY, most of June and the beginning of July has been strong

3.

Destinations continue to rely heavily on family, friends and others in their sphere of influence to understand real-time travel dynamics post-covid. The Pigeon Forge target audience continues been very engaged with our User Generated Content (UGC), engaging with both nostalgic posts and discussing upcoming or current trips

4.

There remains a lack of clarity for consumers on what facts are around travel, which has been further convoluted as federal and state officials offer differing views. It's critical Pigeon Forge and its businesses keep safety as our number 1 priority, and remain transparent and a reliable source as visitors begin to return

Visitor Safety Tips



WHAT POTENTIAL VISITORS WANT TO KNOW

Knowing that safety is a top priority for potential visitors, your business should reinforce the additional steps and precautions that are being taken by you.

- Reinforce that Your Top Priority is the Safety of Your Guests and Employees.
- Provide access to the following information on your website and property:
 - Policies related to cleanliness and social distancing
 - Cancellation or reschedule policies
 - Steps you are taking to support your employees or team members
 - What you may be doing to help your community
- Provide info regarding enhancements/changes made related to cleaning procedures
- Have written guidelines posted on your website and throughout your property

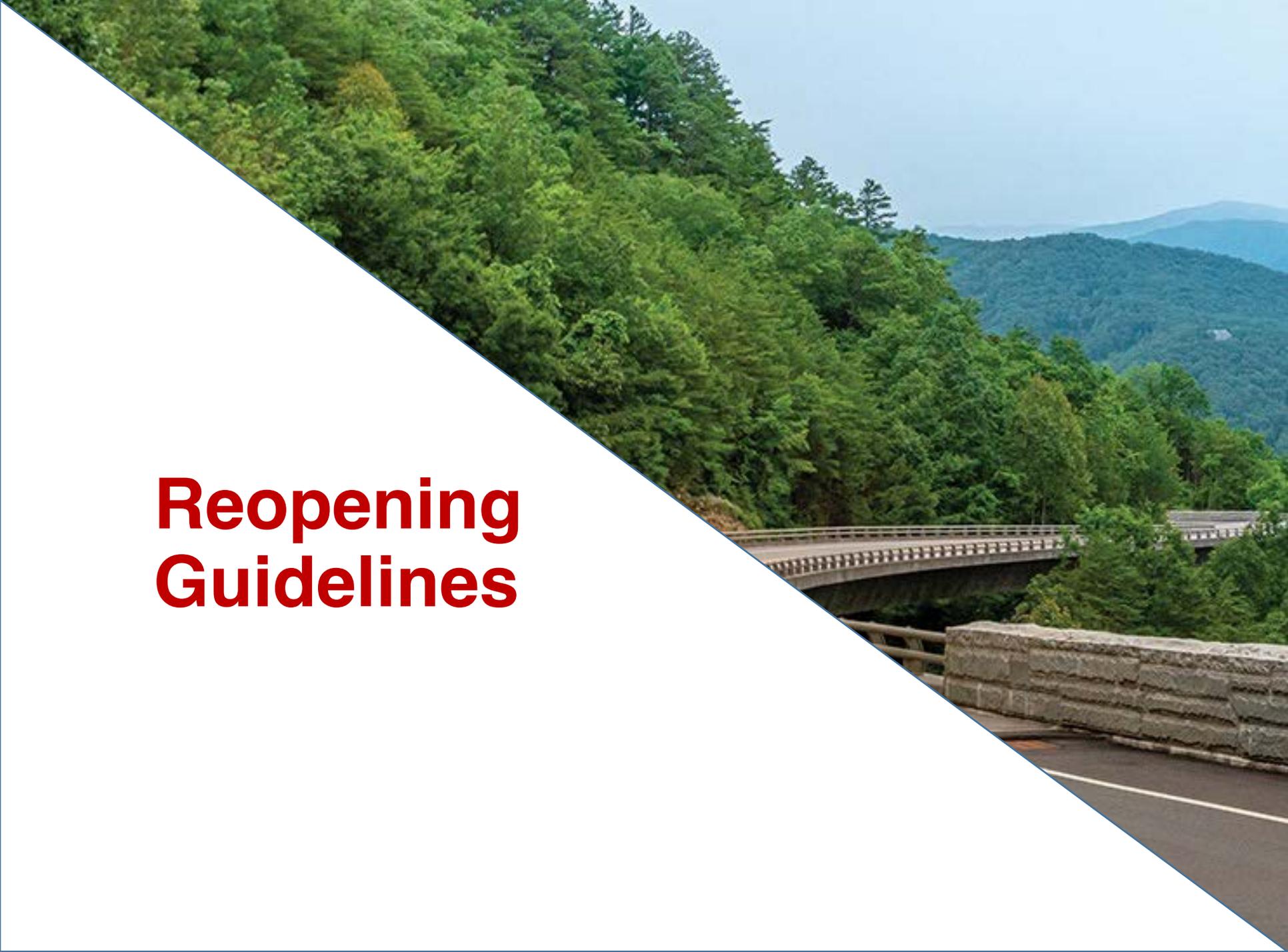
WHAT POTENTIAL VISITORS WANT TO KNOW

- Examples of points to consider communicating, as relevant to your business:
 - How you are supporting your employees that interact w/ your guests;
 - Are you encouraging good hand hygiene?
 - Are you doing more regular cleaning, or increasing frequency of cleaning?
 - Have you provided any additional training or equipment (masks, gloves)?
 - Are you doing employee temperature checks before shifts begin?
 - What you are providing for your guests;
 - Is hand sanitizer readily available to guests?
 - Are bathrooms more frequently checked to ensure they're clean?
 - Are your bathrooms stocked with soap and paper towels?
 - Are you reducing personal contact (eliminating paper tickets/offering contactless check-in?)
 - If a restaurant, have you moved to disposable menus, or minimized items that remain on tables, such as marketing materials, condiments or tableware?

WHAT POTENTIAL VISITORS WANT TO KNOW

- Steps to encourage social distancing at your business
 - Are you seating people further apart?
 - How you are encouraging employees to minimize close contact.
 - For lines, are you taking steps to enforce everyone is 6 feet apart?
 - Are you reducing guest capacity at your business?
 - Are you encouraging guests to come in at staggered timeslots?
- Steps taken if a guest appears to be ill, coughing or sneezing.

Reopening Guidelines



STATE OF TENNESSEE REOPENING GUIDELINES

The "Tennessee Pledge" is a plan to help Tennesseans return to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods and reboot our state's economy. The full document can be found [here](#).

- The Tennessee Pledge states that restaurants are currently allowed to be open but must adhere to the guidelines specified [here](#). Please note that bar areas are to remain closed, and no live music is to be permitted.
- Lodging & Accommodations properties are advised to following the following operating guidelines [here](#).
- Retail establishments are allowed to be open but must also adhere to the guidelines specified [here](#).
- Exercise facilities are currently allowed open with guidelines for operating are outlined [here](#).
- Small-group recreational businesses, such as bowling alleys and mini golf courses, can open using operating guidelines outlined [here](#).
- Barbershops, salons and other close contact businesses may open based on safety guidelines provided [here](#).
- City/county leaders along with input from Sevier County business partners recommend the following guidelines specified [here](#) for our community and were not included in the State's Tennessee Pledge.

STATE OF TENNESSEE REOPENING GUIDELINES

Universal Guidelines For All Businesses

For Employers

- **Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms** with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening employees:**
 - Best practice: employers to take temperatures on site with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work.
 - Minimum: Temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - **Medical-quality non-contact infrared forehead thermometers** are available for purchase [here](#). There is a limit of 10 per business, and orders will only ship to Tennessee-based businesses.

STATE OF TENNESSEE REOPENING GUIDELINES

Universal Guidelines For All Businesses

For Employers (Cont.)

- **Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines. Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- **Implement workplace cleaning and disinfection** practices, according to CDC guidelines, with regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces at least every two hours
- **Mitigate exposure in the workplace** by implementing social distancing guidelines and modify scheduling
- **Allow employees to work from home as much as possible**
- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases**, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)
- **Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms

STATE OF TENNESSEE REOPENING GUIDELINES

Universal Guidelines For All Businesses

For Employers (Cont.)

- **Update the Employee Illness Policy** to include the symptoms of “COVID-19” or create a COVID-19 specific policy. All staff should sign the policy, and the policy should be posted for confirmation
- **Limit self-service options** (customer samples, communal packaging, food/beverages, etc.)
- **Post extensive signage on health policies**, including the following documents in the workplace to help educate building occupants on COVID-19 best practices:
 - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
 - [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- Best practices on Community Guidance can be found [here](#).

STATE OF TENNESSEE REOPENING GUIDELINES

Tennessee Pledge Toolkit

A toolkit has been developed by the State for use by businesses/organizations including:

- Social media graphics along with sample social media copy and a request that businesses post photos of how they are implementing the TN Pledge guidelines
- Variations of two posters – one for customer-facing front of house use and another for employee-facing back of house use. There is room at the bottom of white 8.5x11 and all 11x17 versions to add association and individual business logos.
- TN Pledge logos for various uses
- PSA copy and talking points with request for business owners and industry leaders to record videos and post photos

Businesses and organizations in the state are asked to support the Tennessee Pledge Program by displaying posters and posting to social media

To download the Tennessee Pledge Toolkit:

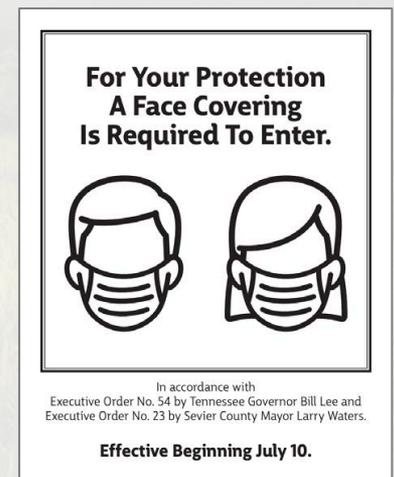
[CLICK HERE](#)

FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS FOR SEVIER COUNTY

On July 3, 2020 Gov. Bill Lee's signed Executive Order 54 which granted county mayors the authority to issue local face covering requirements in the event of a significant rise in COVID-19 cases.

Based on that order, Sevier County Mayor Larry Waters issued a Sevier County order requiring face coverings to be worn in all public indoor facilities.

- [Sevier County Executive Order 23](#) will take effect at 12:01 p.m. on July 10 and will expire on August 3, 2020.
- The [county-wide executive order](#) requires that all businesses post signage at public entrances informing patrons of the face covering requirement. Included is a [printable sign](#) for you to use.
- There are exemptions to this order, which are detailed within it [here](#).
- The Pigeon Forge DOT is also providing pre-recorded audio announcements that you may utilize at your business supporting this order, available [here](#).



ADDITIONAL GOV'T RESOURCES

Below are additional resources and guidelines that you may use for your business. Some of these are specific for all businesses and others are more specific for different industries

- [U.S. Travel Association: COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [American Hotel & Lodging Association: COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [National Restaurant Association: COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [U.S. Food & Drug Administration: Best Practices for Best Practices for Retail Food Stores Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [U.S. Food & Drug Administration: Food Safety Resources](#)
- [U.S. Food & Drug Administration: Retail Food Protection](#)
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\): Resources for Businesses & Employers](#)
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\): Disinfectant Tips for Businesses that House People Overnight,](#)
- [Department of Health & Human Resources \(OSHA\): Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
- [CDC](#) and [FDA](#) information on PPE (i.e., gloves, face masks/coverings, and protective gear)

ADDITIONAL GOV'T RESOURCES

Below are additional resources and guidelines that you may use for your business. Some of these are specific for all businesses and others are more specific for different industries

- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- Hygiene Resources & Downloads for Businesses:
 - [Coronavirus: What You Can Do Fact Sheet \(English & Spanish\)](#)
 - [Handwashing 101 Poster \(English & Spanish\)](#) and [Youtube Video](#)
 - [Handwashing Infographic](#)
 - [Before You Come To Work Poster](#)
 - [Cleaning vs. Sanitizing Poster \(English & Spanish\)](#)
 - [Clean-up of Vomiting and Diarrheal Event Poster](#)
 - [Food Safety Focus Blog](#)



Local Business Marketing Communication

MARKETING LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Communicating to Your Audience:

- Deliver a Customer-First Message: Provide Re-assurance that your business is committed to their safety and the safety of your employees
- Outline the steps you are taking to address all possible concerns
- Clearly articulate all dining options available including any in-restaurant guidelines, online ordering, curbside pickup and any delivery options
- Thank your customers for their ongoing support and loyalty

Be Consistent & Frequent:

- Determine a regular cadence to communicate with your customers (could be more than once per week)
- Ensure it's the same message across all points of consumer contact including your employees, building exterior, text, website, email and social media

Reflect your Brand Voice:

- Keeping consistent brand tone is critical
- You can build trust by being transparent and authentic

MARKETING LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Communicate at the Right Time Across Communication Channels:

- For general communication use every channel available, including email, text, push notification, and social so your message is cast broadly. For targeted communications, send messages over your customers' preferred channels.

Listen & Respond to your Customers:

- Gather, act on, and measure customer feedback to keep a pulse of customer sentiment and expectations
- If negative customer feedback is provided, respond quickly on the same channel showing appreciation and how you will take action—not defensiveness
- Experiment with new approaches and tactics and make sure to respond in a timely manner

SAMPLE MARKETING LANGUAGE

- Following are guidelines and examples of communication that are fairly general in nature to ensure it is language that you can easily pick up and use.
- These examples may be placed on your business website, delivered in an e-newsletter, or on your social pages.
- Please feel free to add any other specifics about additional steps or protocols your business has enacted to work to ensure the safety of your guests and employees. For examples, are you screening your employees before a shift, are your team members wearing face masks and/or gloves, have you installed plexiglass shields to provide a safety barrier between team members and customers?

SAMPLE MARKETING LANGUAGE

COVID-19 Update / Travel Information Example:

Travel Information: The wellbeing of our guests and associates is of paramount importance. We are closely monitoring the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization's statements regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and following guidelines from these agencies and the local health departments.

SAMPLE MARKETING LANGUAGE

Example 2:

What we're doing to prioritize your safety:

- We are implementing increased health and safety measures with our team members in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure they can safely serve you and your family.
- We ask you to remember **6-20-100**: Keep social distance of at least six feet, wash your hands for 20 seconds, stay home if you have a fever of 100 degrees or more.
- We have implemented social distance guidelines of at least six feet at all public locations, including our front desks, counters and lobbies. We are also taking additional measures to help ensure those same social distancing guidelines are kept throughout our business.
- Be patient: We're all in this together and we know that your time with us here in Pigeon Forge will be better remembered if we all support each other.

SAMPLE MARKETING LANGUAGE

Additional Examples:

- Pigeon Forge is all of us. Together we are forging ahead to bring home our family and friends again.
- Your home away from home misses you! Now is the perfect time to begin thinking about a future trip to Pigeon Forge.
- It's time to think about that next great Pigeon Forge adventure. Because when it happens, we'll be ready, and it will be incredible

Usable Imagery:

The following link will direct you to imagery that may be used with any of your social posting or e-newsletters as you continue to communicate with your fans and followers.

[My Pigeon Forge Mountain & Family Imagery](#)

Discount Messaging:

Some businesses may consider additional discounting to attract visitors, it's strongly encouraged to position any reduced rates as an enhanced 'value' versus the term 'discount'

SAFETY SIGNAGE

The following sign that encourages safety standards during this time may be downloaded and printed for use at your business.

Included in this link is an 8" x 5" sign, as well as a 22" x 28" poster size sign:

<https://mypigeonforge.canto.com/b/RKH87>



FACE MASK SIGNAGE

The following sign informs visitors that a face covering is required to enter a public space. These may be downloaded and printed for use at your business.

Included in this link is an 8" x 5" sign, as well as a 22" x 28" poster size sign:

https://www.mypigeonforge.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PFT_Covid_BusinessMaskSigns2_8.5x11_FINAL.pdf



STANDING TOGETHER

All of our thoughts are with those who are affected by COVID-19. We also extend our deepest gratitude to those who continue to provide medical care, essential government functions and life-sustaining services during this time.

The Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism stands in support of the tourism and hospitality communities — both locally and around the globe. The well-being of our residents and visitors is our greatest priority. It is in our nature to look for fun, new adventures. And to do so safely, it is important that we all act and adventure responsibly. As such, we are working on thoughtful ways to promote Pigeon Forge during this situation and position our destination for success now and well into the future.

All of us here in Pigeon Forge are already tough. By supporting one another, we'll come out of this stronger.

Standing Together,
The Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism Team

**THANK
YOU**

