

News Release
For Immediate Release

March 4, 2021

Edmonton tourism and hospitality industries announce a collaborative commitment to pursuing city-wide GBAC STAR™ accreditation.

Edmonton to become first Canadian destination with health & safety designation.

Edmonton, AB – Explore Edmonton has announced a collaborative initiative with the Edmonton International Airport, Edmonton Destination Marketing Hotels (EDMH), the Oilers Entertainment Group and the already accredited Edmonton Convention Centre and Edmonton EXPO Centre to pursue a city-wide [Global Biorisk Advisory Council® \(GBAC\) STAR™](#) Accreditation for Edmonton, positioning Edmonton among the healthiest and safest destinations for business and leisure travel in North America. Once complete, Edmonton will be the first and only Canadian destination, and one of only two destinations throughout North America, to obtain the GBAC STAR™ Accreditation.

The GBAC STAR™ Accreditation program is the cleaning industry's only outbreak prevention, response and recovery accreditation for facilities and destinations. This means the cleaning and sanitization programs of participating Edmonton hotels, venues and transportation agencies will be accredited and validated by the gold standard program that prepares them with the right systems to protect against biorisk situations, including COVID-19.

“Edmonton’s tourism, hospitality and events industries will play an important role in our region’s post-COVID recovery, getting people back to work, welcoming travelers back to the city and delivering important economic and social benefits to our region,” said Maggie Davison, Acting CEO, Explore Edmonton. *“Edmonton’s GBAC STAR™ Accreditation will ensure our international airport, major venues and hotels are all working towards the same standards for cleanliness and outbreak prevention. By working in partnership, Edmonton can safely reopen for business and provide one of the safest travel experiences in North America, from arrival to departure.”*

To obtain GBAC STAR™ Accreditation, facilities must demonstrate compliance with 20 specific elements including maintaining strict cleaning protocols, disinfection techniques, infectious disease prevention planning, staff training and more.

“Health and safety are always our top priorities and we know how important it is for visitors to feel both welcomed and safe. Edmonton’s designation as a city that in today’s challenging world puts outbreak and virus safety top of mind will make a positive difference in attracting tourism, conventions and other events back to our region,” said Tom Ruth, President & CEO, EIA. *“Explore Edmonton is*

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working to make sure visitors know this is a great and safe destination and as the gateway to our region, we're on-board to support this."

"We recognize that we live in unparalleled times. Hotels have always had strong cleanliness standards, but operating through a pandemic has amplified those requirements, ensuring the safety of our guests and staff," said Bernie Yerxa, Board Chair of the Edmonton Destination Marketing Hotels. "Our organization has always been one to collaborate with key partners within the City of Edmonton and that is why our organization jumped at the opportunity when Explore Edmonton brought the idea of bringing multiple organizations together to showcase our city as a safe destination to travel to when the time is right. As we've advanced over the years with state-of-the-art online bookings systems, increased in-room amenities and gourmet-level food & beverage offerings, the newest standard that participating hotels will incorporate is a sanitized level of safety, thanks to the GBAC STAR™."

"As a leader in Edmonton's Sports and Entertainment industry, Rogers Place and the Oilers Entertainment Group are proud to support the collaborative effort being undertaken in conjunction with our partners at Explore Edmonton, the Edmonton International Airport and Edmonton Destination Marketing Hotels to achieve a city-wide GBAC STAR™ Accreditation," said Jay MacDonald, Assistant General Manager, Rogers Place. "The safety of our fans, staff and partners is of paramount importance, this accreditation provides third-party validation of the rigorous protocols we have undertaken to ensure a clean, safe and healthy environment."

Edmonton's accreditation process is anticipated to be finalized by Spring, 2021. Participating hotels, venues and transportation partners include:

- [Edmonton International Airport](#)
- [Rogers Place](#)
- [EDMH](#) hotels (38 participating properties across Edmonton)
- [Edmonton Convention Centre](#) (already accredited)
- [Edmonton EXPO Centre](#) (already accredited)

"The pursuit of GBAC STAR™ Facility Accreditation by various venues in Edmonton is a testament to the city's commitment to making cleaning, disinfection and infection prevention an ongoing priority for its citizens and visitors," said GBAC Executive Director Patricia Olinger. "Through the GBAC STAR accreditation, they show their commitment to their communities by implementing a higher level of cleaning."

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ABOUT EXPLORE EDMONTON

We are the visitor economy and venue management organization for Edmonton. Together, we tell our city's story, elevate the Edmonton experience and generate inbound visitation. We want visitors to have more than enough reasons to visit, explore and stay longer in Edmonton. In working closely with our partners & stakeholders, our efforts positively impact the economic diversity and quality of life for Edmonton residents, while remaining competitive in a global marketplace. In collaboration with our hotels, attractions and businesses, we strive to make Edmonton a four-season destination of choice, delivering year-round transformational visitor and guest experiences. For more information, visit exploreedmonton.com.

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