Travel Industry Update
May 20, 2020

US-Canada and US-Mexico border closures extended to June 22

- Travelers looking to make a trip to Canada or Mexico will have to wait another 30 days as the Department of Homeland Security extended border closures to curb COVID-19 infections.
- Only “essential” travel is permitted. Trade will continue.

Despite social distancing guidelines, airlines are packing in customers; should there be a national policy for airlines?

- As restaurants, department stores and other local businesses grapple with operating at half occupancy (or less) to comply with social distancing guidelines, airlines are packing customers to near capacity on a reduced number of flights.
- The practice shows how a lack of a national policy allows certain companies — like airlines — to continue to put Americans at risk for exposure to COVID-19 while other companies miss out on revenue by adhering to local regulations.
- While policymakers have created local ordinances for land-based businesses and public transit services that require new layouts to reduce the number of people, airlines have no such oversight.
- Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), ranking member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, sent a letter this week to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao urging her department to issue uniform national social distancing guidelines for the aviation sector.
- Airlines have repeatedly said they can’t afford to fly with reduced passenger loads.

JetBlue and United stepping up cleaning efforts

- JetBlue said it would continue blocking seats on its aircraft through at least July 6, check crew members’ temperatures and step up aircraft cleaning with electrostatic aircraft fogging in June.
- United said it was teaming up with U.S. cleaning products company Clorox Co and Cleveland Clinic medical experts to advise on new cleaning and safety protocols, and plans to roll out Clorox electrostatic sprayers and disinfecting wipes at its hub airports in Chicago and Denver, followed by other locations.
- United is also implementing temperature checks for staff, electrostatic spraying and touchless kiosks, and providing individually wrapped hand sanitizer wipes to passengers as they board.
**Lufthansa expects hundreds of aircraft to still be grounded until 2022**

- The airline’s executive board said that 300 aircraft would remain grounded in 2021 and that 200 aircraft would be grounded in 2022.
- In the summer of 2023, the airline still expects its fleet to be smaller by 100 aircraft than it was before the pandemic.
- The airline group had a fleet of 763 planes at the end of 2019.
- The airline expects a “considerable number” of job cuts in its maintenance and catering units as well.

**Alitalia to resume flights to southern Italy and the US on June 2**

- The airline plans to resume flights to New York, Spain and connections between Milan and the south of the country beginning June 2.
- The carrier said in June flights would rise by 36% compared with May, with 30 different routes connecting Italian and foreign airports.
- In the third quarter the carrier plans to increase its activity “at about 40% of what was planned before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic”, it said.
- In order to comply with new regulation and social distancing guideline the carrier said that the load factor had more than halved inside aircraft.

**US Hotels have lost $23 billion in room revenue, since February**

- According to the American Hotel and Lodging Association, U.S. properties have already lost more than $23 billion in room revenue since mid-February.
- Hotels across the country are on track to lose more than $400 million in room revenue per day due to COVID-19, which equates to losses of $2.8 billion weekly.
- With 70 percent of direct hotel employees laid off or furloughed, hotel workers are losing more than $2.4 billion in earnings each week.

**More than 1/3 of those unemployed in the US are from the travel industry**

- “38% of all the unemployed in the United States are from the travel industry. This is two times worse than the Great Depression...” said Roger Dow, President and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association.

**St. Lucia sets re-opening date of June 4**

- Saint Lucia will be the first Caribbean destination to officially reopen for tourism if it re-opens on June 4.
- The first phase of the reopening will reopen Saint Lucia’s Hewanorra International Airport, which will be only open to travelers from the United States.
- Visitors to Saint Lucia will be required to present “certified proof” of a negative COVID-19 test within 48 hours of boarding their flight.
- Visitors will also be subject to health screenings and temperature checks by Saint Lucia airport authorities, and upon arrival all travelers must continue to use face masks and practice social distancing.
- Protocols are also being set up for taxis and other transfers.
• As for hotels, properties have to meet “a dozen or more” specific health, social distancing and other protocols before being able to reopen.