Travel Industry Update
July 9, 2020

**American, United stop flying to Hong Kong amid crew testing requirements**

- United Airlines and American Airlines have temporarily halted flights to Hong Kong after its government imposed coronavirus testing requirements for airline crews.
- Hong Kong’s Centre for Health Protection has said that as of Wednesday, incoming crews will be subject to the collection of “deep throat saliva specimens,” and any person refusing to be tested will be subject to a fine and imprisonment. If a crew member tests positive, “hospital admission will be arranged as soon as possible.”
- American is halting flights to Hong Kong until Aug. 5 because of the requirements.
- In a statement, United said a flight between San Francisco and Hong Kong that had been scheduled for Wednesday was canceled because of “recent changes in testing protocol” at Hong Kong International Airport. It added that “United flights to and from HKG are suspended through July 10 westbound and their corresponding returns. We are currently assessing how this impacts our future operations.”

**United warns 36,000 employees of potential job cuts**

- United Airlines on Wednesday said it is warning about 36,000 front-line employees — more than a third of its staff — about potential furloughs.
- This is the largest potential lay off announced by US airlines so far, due to travel restrictions and a decline in travel due to the pandemic.
- United said workers who are informed that their jobs are at risk might not ultimately get furloughed. The company said it will exhaust voluntary measures before cutting employees. Some of the furloughed staff may be called back to work but that will depend on a return to demand, which some industry executives say could take years.
- The furloughs would apply to unionized workers and warnings are going to some 15,000 flight attendants, more than half of the airline’s cabin crew, and more than 2,200 pilots. The airline also said more than 4,500 mechanics and technicians as well as more than 11,000 airport operations staff will receive Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, or WARN, notices.
- Furloughs start with the most junior employees. But because United is eyeing such deep staff reductions, flight attendants safe from furloughs would had to have started at the carrier around mid-November 1996 or earlier, according to another staff memo.
- United had about 96,000 employees as of the end of last year.

**Emirates lays off more pilots, crew in latest round of job cuts**

- Although exact numbers were not given, mostly Airbus A380 pilots were affected by the job cuts this week.
• Emirates has taken many of its Airbus A380 aircraft off line this year due to decreased travel demand.
• Emirates plans to have all Airbus A380 aircraft back in service by April 2022.

**TSA makes changes after whistleblower's complaint**

• The changes include requiring screeners to change or sanitize gloves after every time they pat down a passenger, and to wear face shields around travelers if there aren’t plastic barriers between them and the public.
• Jay Brainard, the top TSA official in Kansas, complained last month to a federal whistleblower-protection office that TSA didn’t train staff for the virus pandemic and barred supervisors from giving screeners stockpiled N95 respirators in March when facial coverings such as surgical masks were hard to buy.
• Brainard said the TSA eventually made changes in response to COVID-19, including requiring screeners to wear masks, but the measures did not go far enough.
• “This is the fastest I’ve ever seen an agency make changes” after a whistleblower complaint, said Devine, an attorney with the Government Accountability Project, which represents whistleblowers.

**Disney releases coronavirus safety measures as Central Florida parks set to reopen**

• Disney on Wednesday released new details about the safety precautions it will be taking at Central Florida theme parks when they reopen to the public on Saturday.
• The changes are:
  o Reservations are required.
  o All cast members and Disney guests 2 years of age and older will be required to wear a face covering. The face covering must be worn at all times except when eating or drinking.
  o Limiting capacity on resort guest transportation systems. Guests must continue wearing their face coverings on the transportation system. Busses and monorails will have physical barriers designed to keep people socially distanced.
  o Temperature screenings will be conducted before guests enter theme parks. Those who again measure 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will not be allowed entry, nor will those in their party.
  o Park entry is now touchless, and greeters will be on hand to verify reservations.
  o Hand washing and hand sanitizing stations put up in all the parks.
  o Ground markings have been added to attraction lines, shops and restaurants to help guide people in maintaining a proper distance from other parties.
  o Most rides will be open, but loading procedures have been adjusted to keep a distance between riders.
  o Capacity in shops will also be limited and cashless transactions will be encouraged.
  o Disney said changes are also being made to keep eateries safe. Cleaning is being enhanced in waiting and dining areas and increased distance between seated parities. Food and drink self-service stations have been removed.
  o Mobile ordering through the My Disney Experience app is now the primary way to order and pay for food at quick-service restaurants.
- Disney said some of its table service restaurants will now be offering mobile check in through the app. After check in, guests will get a notification when their table is ready.