Travel Industry Update
August 3, 2020

White House opposes requirement for passengers to wear masks on planes, trains

- The White House on Thursday said it opposed language in a bill before Congress that would require airline, train and public transit passengers and workers to wear masks amid the coronavirus pandemic.
- The White House Office of Management and Budget called the provision in a U.S. House of Representatives spending bill requiring the masks “overly restrictive.” It added that “such decisions should be left to states, local governments, transportation systems, and public health leaders.”
- Airlines, Amtrak and most public transit systems and U.S. airports require all passengers and workers to wear facial coverings.
- Representative David Price, a Democrat who chairs the appropriations panel overseeing transportation issues, proposed an amendment this month to require the masks.

TSA passenger numbers reach highest level since March 17

- On Aug 2, TSA cleared 799,861 passengers through its security checkpoints. One year ago on the same date, it cleared 2,688,640 passengers.
- The 799,861 passengers is the largest number of passengers cleared through TSA checkpoints since March 17 when TSA cleared 953,699.

Southwest Reduces Aircraft Cleaning Between Flights

- As of August 1, 2020, Southwest Airlines has adjusted its cleaning protocols between flights for the worse. Specifically, the airline is now only cleaning tray tables and lavatories between flights, rather than all surfaces.
- As the airline describes this decision, Southwest’s flight schedule is “evolving,” and as a result the airline is returning to standard turn times, which reduces the time available to clean between flights. In other words, the airline had temporarily added extra time between flights to clean aircraft, and that buffer has now been eliminated.
- In trying to come up with a new cleaning protocol, the airline claims it wanted to identify a solution that considered the feedback from employees and addressed concerns of guests, in order to make cleaning more efficient.
- Here’s the new procedure, as of August 1, 2020:
  - One ramp agent agent will board the aircraft as soon as the flight arrives and the door is opened
  - During passenger deplaning, flight attendants should follow their standard procedures to tidy the aircraft, which includes crossing seatbelts, picking up trash, and opening all overhead bins
The ramp agent will follow the flight attendants as they tidy, and will clean the top, bottom, and latch of each tray table.

At provisioning station locations, the provisioning agent will clean the lavatories, while at all other stations, the ramp agent will perform that work.

- Southwest Airlines claims that it recently tested five modified cleaning procedures at Dallas Love Field Airport. The above solution was selected based on feedback from employees and customers.

**United adds some international flights for September, but remains cautious**

- United says it plans to fly in September about 37% of what it operated a year earlier, but up 4 percentage points from its August 2020 schedule.
- The airline is remaining cautious about adding too many flights as demand is still low.
- Routes include Chicago to Tel Aviv, Chicago to Hong Kong and Houston to Amsterdam. It is also going after vacationers with service to Cabo San Lucas and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico and to San Jose and Liberia, Costa Rica.
- Domestic flying will be 40% of its September 2019 schedule.

**British Airways pilots vote to accept jobs deal**

- British Airways pilots have voted to accept a deal that will temporarily cut pay by 20% and eliminate 270 jobs, says the pilots' union Balpa.
- The deal prevents a controversial "fire-and-rehire" scheme where staff would have been handed new contracts "on worse conditions".
- The 20% pay cuts will reduce to 8% over two years and to zero in the long term.
- The ballot result saw 85% of members accept the deal on an 87% turnout.

**Cathay Pacific offers early retirement scheme to older pilots**

- Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd said it will offer a voluntary scheme to its Hong Kong-based pilots who are approaching retirement age to leave the group early, in a continued effort to cut costs amid the coronavirus pandemic.
- Pilots aged 50 or 55 and above, depending on the retirement age outlined in their contract as 55 or 65 respectively, are eligible to apply for the early retirement scheme, the carrier said. Pilots aged 58 and above at its regional arm Cathay Dragon are also eligible.
- The scheme will pay pilots who retire early three months basic salary for each year remaining before their normal retirement age, plus a further one month allowance payment up to a maximum of 12 months' basic salary.

**Air Canada threatens to cancel Airbus A220 order if government doesn’t ease restrictions**

- Air Canada is fed up with the Canadian government’s travel restrictions and is threatening to cancel its order for the made-in-Canada Airbus A220 to get them eased.
- A combination of international arrival restrictions, including the closure of the U.S.-Canada border, plus internal restrictions and quarantines has hit the Montreal-based
carrier hard, said Air Canada CEO Calin Rovinescu during a second quarter earnings call Friday.

- On top of this, the Canadian government has provided minimal financial support beyond an employee wage subsidy program.
- “Without government industry support and as travel restrictions are extended, we will look at other opportunities to reduce costs and capital, including further route suspensions and possible cancellations of Boeing and Airbus aircraft on order,” he said.
- The airline reported a net loss of Canadian dollar 1.75 billion ($1.28 billion) in the second quarter. Passenger traffic fell by nearly 97% compared to the same three-month period in 2019.

COVID-19 in August: Your Guide to US State Travel Restrictions

- Many states have mandated that inbound travelers adhere to quarantine rules upon arrival, while some have testing or pre-testing options, so you can skip the self-isolation period.
- Several states have identified specific areas the country from which travelers are subject to restrictions, while others have imposed none at all.
- Full list available [here](#).

One of the first ships to resume cruising is having a COVID outbreak

- Norwegian expedition cruise company Hurtigruten late Friday said four sick crew members from the 535-passenger Roald Amundsen were admitted to the University Hospital of North Norway in Tromsø, Norway, earlier in the day after the vessel docked in the city. All four had tested positive for COVID-19.
- On Saturday, the line said another 32 crew members had tested positive for the illness.
- The Roald Amundsen on Friday had just finished a seven-night sailing out of Tromsø to the Arctic’s wildlife-filled Svalbard archipelago.
- All four of the hospitalized crew members had been sick for several days while on board the vessel, and all four had been placed in isolation. But the line said their symptoms weren’t consistent with COVID-19. They only tested positive for the illness after the ship docked in Tromsø early Friday.
- It’s unclear if the crew members are seriously ill, or if they only are being hospitalized as a way to keep them isolated.
- Hurtigruten on Saturday said it had contacted all 178 passengers who left the ship early Friday, and they had been ordered to self-quarantine in line with Norwegian health regulations.
- The company also has contacted another 209 passengers who were aboard the previous sailing of the Roald Amundsen, and they have been told to self-quarantine, too.
- The next voyage of the vessel, which had been scheduled to begin Friday, has been canceled.
- The trips only have been open to local travelers from select European countries. No Americans have been on board the vessels.
- Hurtigruten had implemented a wide range of new health and safety measures on Roald Amundsen and the other ships it brought back into operation, including enhanced cleaning, added medical screenings for passengers and crew, and an end to buffets. All the vessels were operating at a sharply reduced capacity, below 50% of normal, to ensure social distancing.
• The measures were similar to what many lines have been touting as the solution to keeping coronavirus off ships as cruising resumes.

**Wyndham Hotels Will Require Masks On All Of Its Properties**

• Orlando-based Wyndham Hotels and Resorts announced that all visitors to its properties in the United States and Canada would be required to wear masks in public areas.

• “We all must play a role in slowing the spread of COVID-19,” said Geoff Ballotti, president and CEO, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts in a public statement. “This is a simple step we can take to help protect guests, team members, franchisees, and the countless communities we serve.”

• Wyndham currently operates over 9,000 hotels across almost two dozen brands around the world. Flagship brands include Howard Johnson, La Quinta, Super 8 and Travelodge.

• The mask requirement only applies to Wyndham properties in the United States and in Canada and is part of the brand’s Count on Us initiative, which outlines a variety of measures that the hotels are taking to ensure traveler safety.