Travel Industry Update  
August 12, 2020

**American Airlines extends window for employees to seek voluntary exit**

- American Airlines told employees on Tuesday the company is extending the window to apply for voluntary exit packages or long-term voluntary leave of absences through Aug. 17.
- The announcement comes as it is uncertain if Congress will approve another $25 billion in payroll assistance for passenger airlines to keep tens of thousands of workers employed for another six months after Sept. 30.
- American said it would “keep the application window open until we have more clarity about how Congress and the administration intend to proceed.”

**British Airways considering offering pre-flight Covid-19 testing**

- British Airways is considering offering pre-flight Covid-19 testing in an attempt to boost customer confidence.
- “We are currently discussing the possibility of helping our customers access pre-flight testing through third parties if their destination requires this, however no plans have been finalized. We will share more in due course.”
- British Airways makes clear that unlike airlines such as Emirates and Etihad, “It is not making pre-flight testing mandatory for all customers.”

**France Bans Reusable Face Masks Onboard Planes**

- Passengers traveling to France have fallen foul of a little-known piece of legislation banning reusable masks on flights. The Decree, published in July, stated that passengers must wear disposable, surgical type masks, rather than the popular reusable type. While enforcement of this rule seems to vary between airlines, some passengers are now reporting a refusal of boarding unless a surgical mask is worn.
- The legislation refers to Decree Number 2020-860 which was issued by the French government on July 10th. This states that:
  - Anyone eleven years of age or over wears, on board aircraft providing public transport to, from or within the national territory, upon boarding, a disposable surgical-type mask meeting the characteristics set out in the Annex 1 to this decree.

**Amtrak releases criteria for restoring long-distance service**

- Passenger railroad says three metrics will determine when to restore daily operation after planned Oct. 1 cut to triweekly service.
Public health: COVID-19 hospitalizations must be stable or declining as of Feb. 15, 2021.
Future demand: Advance bookings for June 2021 must be at least 90% of the available seat-miles or room-miles of the figure for June 2020, as of Feb. 15, 2020. Calculations will take into consideration caps on ticket sales to promote social distancing, as well as other COVID-related measures.
Current performance: Ridership in the first quarter of Amtrak’s 2021 fiscal year, which begins in September, must be at least 90% of projections in Amtrak’s 2021 operating plan.

- If all three criteria are met for a given route, service will be restored to daily levels as early as May 2021 and no later than June 30, 2021. In releasing the metrics, Amtrak notes that the plans for reductions and subsequent restoration are dependent on sufficient federal assistance, which it says requires at least $3.5 billion for fiscal 2021.
- While the Oct. 1 date for service reduction has been announced, Amtrak has yet to announce specific scheduling plans for long-distance routes. Only Auto Train is scheduled to remain in daily operation after that date.

**Republican Convention To Mandate Masks, Track Attendees' Movements**

- Delegates at the scaled-back Republican National Convention later this month in Charlotte, N.C., must wear masks, and the GOP plans to track everyone's movements with badges equipped with Bluetooth technology.
- The special badges will allow officials to find out whom they came in contact with if someone later gets sick from the coronavirus, said Jeffrey Runge, the convention’s health consultant.
- That will make contact tracing easier, he said.
- "It knows when other badges are close to it. And how long they are close to it. And the identity of who is wearing it is in a database," Runge said. "No one will ever crack that code, unless somebody gets sick."