

UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

May 22, 2020

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The COVID-19 global pandemic has caused unprecedented damage to the United States travel tourism industry, with estimated losses at nine times that of 9/11.¹ Global travel has slowed to a near standstill with no clear end in sight, raising many concerns about the future of our industry, which generates \$1.87 Trillion in annual economic output and 9.2 Million American jobs.² We believe that swift, collaborative action must be taken by the public and private sectors to restore consumer confidence in travel by addressing key issues and opportunities involving policies and procedures related to public health, standards of care and travel.

We have developed specific recommendations in alignment with the Administration's Guidelines For "Opening Up America Again". Recognizing your role as the principal business voice in the Administration and your leadership of the Tourism Policy Council (TPC), we are pleased to offer these recommendations intended to restore consumer confidence in travel and advance the competitiveness of the U.S. travel and tourism industry.

Recommendations

- **Support acceleration of accessible, reliable, rapid testing for COVID-19; and support broad application of contact tracing or similar measures which are helpful in containing transmission of COVID-19 and providing reliable data for public health agencies, policymakers and the private sector.** Until a vaccine is widely available, the best way to restore consumer confidence and thereby accelerate the economic recovery is to limit the spread of COVID-19. Certified testing and contact tracing are essential in identifying, isolating and treating those infected, and will also enable public health officials to characterize the prevalence, spread and contagiousness of the disease.
- **Strengthen institutional capacity to integrate public health considerations into the development of travel and tourism policy.** The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to the U.S. travel and tourism industry, presenting a clear need to collaboratively navigate the intersection of public health and travel. The TPC serves a very important role in coordinating activities and policy related to travel and tourism across

¹ Source: Adam Sacks, Tourism Economics, and the U.S. Travel Association, *Economic and Travel Outlook In The Shadow of COVID-19* (April 23, 2020).

² Source: National Travel and Tourism Office, *Fast Facts: 2019 United States Travel And Tourism Industry*.

various public agencies. We recommend adding a permanent public health presence to the TPC, such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which will enhance coordination and communication.

- **Support a series of collaborative communications initiatives designed to restore Americans' confidence in travel.** The serious threat to public health caused by COVID-19 has severely weakened the public's confidence in travel. Americans have cancelled nearly all travel plans and will likely delay future travel plans until their confidence is restored. Recent research suggests that proactive measures to ensure cleanliness and hygiene, combined with assurances from reputable medical authorities and the federal government, offer the highest levels of assurance for consumers.³ We highly recommend the Department of Commerce undertake a multi-faceted communication strategy, in collaboration with the private sector and relevant government agencies, to deliver a timely, influential message that will accelerate the recovery of our nation's travel and tourism industry. Considering the unprecedented impact COVID-19 has had on our industry and on traveler sentiment, we anticipate it will be necessary to approach this objective in multiple phases:

Phase 1 – “Building Confidence”: we recommend the Secretary coordinate an interagency messaging campaign highlighting public and private efforts to implement enhanced cleanliness and hygiene standards and procedures, certified testing and physical distancing guidelines, in response to COVID-19. In recent weeks, much work has been completed by several national trade associations⁴ and businesses in the travel and tourism industry, encompassing detailed, voluntary guidelines supported by medical authorities and public health officials, which are intended to protect public health using common standards and principles.

Phase 2 – “Traveling Again”: we recommend the Secretary coordinate an interagency messaging campaign giving a precautionary assurance to domestic, and if circumstances warrant, international travel. The campaign should include trusted public health officials and individuals with broad public respect highlighting the fact that it is now safe to travel to most places. Relevant information highlighting the steps being taken to protect public health and safety throughout the entire travel continuum, and preventive measures individual travelers can take, should be encompassed.

Phase 3 – “Back To A New Normal”: we recommend the Secretary seek the use of federal resources and communication methods to promote the domestic travel economy, including highlighting any new domestic travel incentives instituted by Congress or other federal agencies. This effort should be dedicated to domestic travel industry recovery, unleashing pent up travel demand after the pandemic has ended and public confidence in the safety of travel has been largely reestablished. This is necessary as many destination marketing organizations (DMOs) rely upon transactional accommodations taxes to fund tourism demand generation and those funds will be greatly diminished while the industry

³ Source: U.S. Travel Association, *Engagious Mid-April 2020 Back-to-Normal Barometer* (April 23, 2020).

⁴ Source: U.S. Travel Association *Guidance for Travel In The New Normal* (May 4, 2020); American Hotel Lodging Association *'Safe Stay' Guidelines* (May 4, 2020); Airlines For America *Carriers Taking Action* (May 7, 2020).

recovers. Due to the urgent nature of this recommendation, we believe this effort should involve private sector interests that can react quickly, while working in partnership with the federal government. One possibility could be the timely issuance of Economic Adjustment Assistance grants through an existing Economic Development Administration process.

Phase 4 – “Resume International Inbound Travel”: Brand USA, our nation’s DMO, is well- prepared to accelerate the recovery in travel and tourism by inspiring global travelers to resume visiting the United States and communicating changes in entry and exit requirements. Brand USA is funded by a combination of cash and in-kind contributions from DMOs, state tourism agencies, travel brands, attractions and global media networks, all of which face significant revenue reductions during the recovery. Reasonable measures should be taken to ensure that adequate resources flow to this essential public-private partnership in FY20-21 so it can maximize contributions to the economic recovery.

- **Facilitate a joint effort involving the private sector and relevant federal agencies, including the Department of State, to establish a reliable strategy for the repatriation of U.S. citizens during a global pandemic.** The rapid spread of COVID-19 prompted many travel restrictions, quarantines and border closures with little advance notice in affected nations throughout the world. This situation led to thousands of Americans being stranded abroad, requiring assistance from the federal government to return home. We recommend a thorough review of the recent challenges, actions and outcomes related to repatriation and re-entry, seeking to establish necessary procedures and guidelines to ensure timely communication and prompt return of American citizens if a similar situation were to arise. This should include a thorough review of the utilization and effectiveness of the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) and consideration of how the private sector can expand utilization of STEP and CDC travel health advisories.
- **Encourage relevant federal agencies to thoroughly review and, where appropriate, develop or revise necessary criterion and guidelines to de-escalate health travel advisories, which supports the recovery of travel and tourism.** The COVID-19 pandemic is unique and unprecedented in many ways, with foreign nations issuing diverse health-related travel restrictions. The CDC requires timely, accurate and thorough data to effectively de-escalate from any public health threat, especially a global pandemic. This is made increasingly complicated when working with nations that do not adhere to standard reporting measures and public health protocols, resulting in a disjointed, delayed or otherwise inadequate reopening of the travel and tourism industry with significant economic implications. The CDC acknowledges the limitations it faces in applying trusted epidemiological indicators with inadequate or inconsistent data. The relevant federal agencies should seek reliable policies and essential decision-making criterion that would enable an optimal de-escalation process with acceptable standards of measurement. Furthermore, the federal government should develop (or review) all relevant guidelines to be used during a domestic de-escalation process.

- **Encourage the federal government to thoroughly review and improve the border protection procedures implemented or changed as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic.** In response to the spread of COVID-19, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and CDC made various adjustments to border protection and re-entry procedures. The CDC acknowledges that the procedures implemented have detected a small percentage of the estimated COVID-19 cases imported to the U.S. and may prove inadequate to contain asymptomatic importation. We recommend a thorough review of actions taken to determine optimal guidelines and procedures for handling a future pandemic. The federal government should seek appropriate measures that interdict chains of infection at our nation's borders, thereby improving national security and avoiding costly policies like blanket entry restrictions. This will help restore consumers' confidence in the travel process, keep employees safe and support the recovery of travel and tourism.
- **Accelerate the implementation of biometric identification for U.S. entry and exit to create a contactless traveler identity process.** Biometric identification technologies are increasingly used as a security measure throughout the travel process. One important benefit of this technology is a reduction in the number of common touchpoints, which can reduce threats to public health. The Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, CBP and the private sector (e.g. airlines and airports) should collaborate to expand the current implementation of biometric entry and exit processes, and create a seamless, contactless travel experience.
- **Facilitate a joint effort involving relevant federal agencies and the private sector to thoroughly review and enhance the policies and procedures related to U.S. entry and exit.** The U.S. entry and exit processes are designed to protect national security while managing the flow of large numbers of travelers. The public and private sectors must now contemplate changes in policy, procedure, infrastructure and technology to mitigate the risk to public health, including common touchpoints, safe physical distancing and data collection. Beyond the recommendations related to border protection policies and biometric identification specified herein, we recommend the federal government initiate a collaborative effort amongst the public and private sectors to reimagine the entire entry and exit processes for individual and group travel, seeking the appropriate balance of national security, public health and efficiency while maintaining a welcoming nature throughout the travel experience. This will enhance the recovery of the travel and tourism industry by enabling the U.S. to resume the growth of international inbound travel, while protecting our nation's security and public health.
- **Continue the efforts begun by this working group to enhance resiliency.** As we draft these recommendations, our nation is still managing the COVID-19 global pandemic and beginning to reopen our economy. There is much to be learned from recent and upcoming experience. We strongly encourage a continuation of these efforts, carefully evaluating procedures, processes and guidelines that will enhance our nation's resiliency in the future. This may well become a priority for the next Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. Likewise, an intergovernmental process could be led by the TPC or a joint public-private sector working group.

Furthermore, we believe many measures implemented by the federal government to contain the spread of COVID-19 should be implemented on a temporary basis to avoid unnecessary permanence of regulations. Once the pandemic is under control and de-escalation of COVID-19 travel health restrictions has begun, we recommend a thorough review of all measures implemented by OSHA, CDC and Department of State related to COVID-19 be reviewed to evaluate the need for removal or reversal of measures no longer considered necessary. Likewise, if a second wave of COVID were to emerge, the private sector must be prepared to react immediately and appropriately to protect public health.

Background on Board Approach and Findings

In addition to the relevant industry experience of the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (Board) members, we incorporated the following considerations into the process of developing our recommendations: (a) discussions with the CDC related to travel health advisories, protective measures of public health and border protection procedures; (b) discussions with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration related to protective measures in the workplace; (c) travel-related studies and analysis completed after Ebola and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS); (d) presentations by various trade associations leading initiatives to protect public health and restore consumer confidence in travel, including Airlines For America, the American Hotel and Lodging Association, the American Society of Travel Advisors and the U.S. Travel Association; (e) discussions with Brand USA; and (f) reviews of post-crisis communication strategies designed to restore travel and tourism. All recommendations were developed in alignment with the objectives set forth in the Administration’s Guidelines for “Opening Up America Again”.

The Board appreciates your leadership during this challenging time. We stand ready to assist in this effort, and we look forward to partnering with you and the Department of Commerce to restore consumer confidence in travel and resume the collective efforts previously underway to make the U.S. the world’s leading travel destination.

Respectfully submitted,



John Sprouls
Chair



Kurt Ekert
Vice Chair

Attachments:

U.S. Travel Association *Guidance for Travel In The New Normal*
American Hotel and Lodging Association *Safe Stay Guidelines*



in the **New** *Normal*

Industry Guidance for Promoting the Health and Safety of All Travelers

Developed based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and White House guidelines: "Opening Up America Again" and in consultation with public health experts

Prepared by:

U.S. TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION®

Updated May 4, 2020

C OVID-19 represents an unprecedented challenge to the travel industry. After 9/11, industry leaders said, “without security, there will be no travel.” The global pandemic adds a new dimension to our age of global travel, demanding a comprehensive response: “Without guidance to promote the health and safety of travelers, there will be no travel, no sustainable reopening of our businesses, and no revival of our economy.”

As we move to the next phase of our response to the pandemic, we must demonstrate leadership to elected officials and public health authorities who will decide when, how and under what conditions travel businesses are allowed to reopen across America. Just as importantly, we must also inspire confidence in travelers by demonstrating travel businesses are appropriately focused on their health and safety.

To meet these objectives, the travel industry—hotels, resorts, airports, airlines, attractions, restaurants, retail, rental cars, meeting venues, event producers, travel advisors, cruise lines, vacation rentals etc.— has come together, working with health and medical experts, to reach collective agreement on a core set of health and safety guidance that the industry may adapt to their businesses. They build upon and align with the White House and CDC evidence-based guidelines for “[Opening Up America Again.](#)” This guidance provides our customers with an understanding of the key practices across America’s travel industry.

This guidance reflects the role of the travel industry in promoting the health and safety of our customers and employees. But no industry can overcome this challenge alone. Travelers must also follow health guidelines to do their part to help protect their families and those around them. We must all work together.

The embrace of this guidance by the various segments of the travel industry signals how seriously we take COVID-19 and the threat it presents. Our collective response and desire to tailor this guidance to our businesses demonstrates our industry’s commitment to do its part toward promoting the health of our employees and customers.

This travel industry guidance assumes a phased approach to reopening travel. Our guidance not only directly responds to the COVID-19 threat we face today—it also prepares our industry to handle future threats that may arise. For instance, in the earliest stages of reopening, travel businesses will reinforce CDC travel guidance as to vulnerable individuals. **Travel industry guidance may, of course, evolve and be updated as the nation moves through different stages of reopening, as the science and data become clearer, and as the known efficacy of certain practices progress.**



Collaborating with medical experts has been a critical component to the development of this travel industry guidance. Expertise in Infectious diseases, preventative and occupational medicine led to the various facets of the travel experience being viewed through a lens of how best to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Using a layered approach to health and safety, the guidance reinforces various combined measures such as employee and traveler physical distancing, hand hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE) and behaviors before and during the travel continuum.

As this guidance adapts and evolves, the travel industry will continue to seek the input from trusted medical sources to reflect the latest developments within and guidance from the professional health community.

This document has been developed based on the CDC and White House “[Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#)” and in consultation with these public health experts:

Infectious Diseases Society of America representative to the Working Group

TRISH M. PERL, MD, MSC, FIDSA, FSHEA, FACP

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MICHAEL D PARKINSON, MD, MPH, FACPM

Past President, American College of Preventive Medicine
Principal, P3 Health (Prevention, Performance, Productivity)



For the most up-to-date **COVID-19 resources and information** for the industry, visit: ustravel.org/ReliefResources

CREATE TRANSMISSION BARRIERS

1 Travel businesses should adapt operations, modify employee practices and/or redesign public spaces to help protect employees and customers.

Travel businesses should adapt or establish a strategy designed to reduce risks of COVID-19 transmission. **Depending on the business, that strategy could include operational changes, new employee practices or reimagining high-traffic public spaces.** Strategies should align with CDC guidance and build confidence to travelers and industry employees that their health and safety is our top priority.

For some businesses these strategies will include practices such as:

- ✓ **Reinforcing hand hygiene** which can decrease the risk of transmission of respiratory viruses by ~50%;
- ✓ **Utilizing personal protective equipment (PPE)** such as masks and gloves;
- ✓ **Installing physical barriers**, such as transparent screens to provide proper separation between customers and employees;
- ✓ **Encouraging physical distancing** by posting new signage to ensure proper separation in lines and common areas, discouraging congregating in crowded areas, reconfiguring public spaces, or limiting the number of employees and customers in various areas;
- ✓ **Thinking creatively to limit staff physical contact with customers** where practical while still delivering superior service, for example, through online ordering, curbside service delivery, automated entrances and other practices;
- ✓ **Educating both employees and customers about their shared responsibility** to help protect each other in a COVID-19 environment.



CREATE TRANSMISSION BARRIERS

2 Travel businesses should consider implementing touchless solutions, where practical, to limit the opportunity for virus transmission while also enabling a positive travel experience.

This could mean implementing touchless or low-touch solutions, along with pursuing technological and innovative practices to further promote safe and enjoyable experiences. Such measures may include adopting contactless technologies or procedures for:

- ✓ **Ticketing;**
- ✓ **Identification;**
- ✓ **Check-in;**
- ✓ **Payment** for goods and services;
- ✓ **Automated ordering and pick-up** for food and services; and
- ✓ **A broader range of travel and hospitality amenities.**



ENHANCE SANITATION

3 Travel businesses should adopt and implement enhanced sanitation procedures specifically designed to combat the transmission of COVID-19.

Protecting against COVID-19 requires heightened sanitation practices. In an industry as diverse as travel, specific practices may vary from one segment to another. **Each travel business will continue to tailor procedures to its own operating environment and the expectations of its customers.** Some may also adopt practices verified by third-party certification services. But sanitation procedures will align with leading public health authority guidelines.

To promote the health and safety of our customers and employees, every segment of the travel industry should deploy **enhanced sanitation procedures** that include:

- ✓ **Establish a policy implementing more frequent hand washing by all employees** and, in the absence of hand washing, make frequent use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol);
- ✓ **Sanitizing more frequently, using products and disinfectants that meet requirements for effectiveness against COVID-19;** special attention to high-touch surfaces;
- ✓ **Providing hand sanitizer in public areas** throughout facilities;
- ✓ **Modifying business hours when necessary** to carry out thorough sanitation and disinfection procedures;
- ✓ **Providing new training for employees** on implementing these measures with oversight on execution;
- ✓ **Researching technological innovations** and testing new procedures, as appropriate, to enhance sanitation.



PROMOTE HEALTH SCREENING

4 Travel businesses should promote health screening measures for employees and isolate workers with possible COVID-19 symptoms and provide health resources to customers.

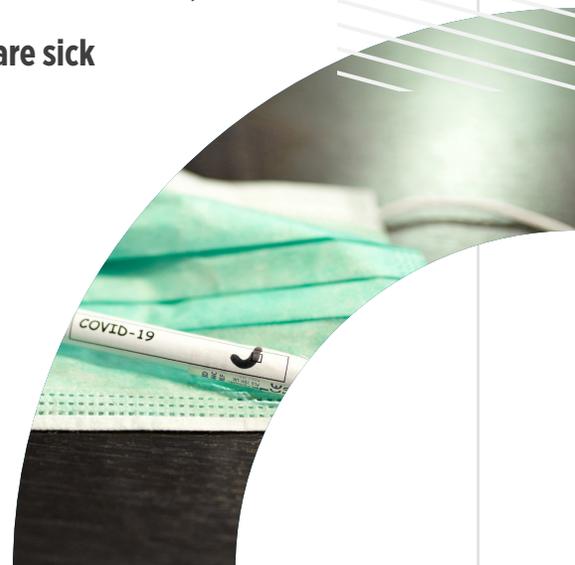
Travel businesses should **adopt health screening procedures** that require all employees:

- ✓ **To monitor** their health;
- ✓ **To not report to work** if they are ill and/or showing any symptoms; and
- ✓ **To self-isolate** if showing symptoms of COVID-19, if awaiting test results, or if diagnosed with COVID-19.

Travel employers and operators should **review their policies** to more easily enable employees to stay home when sick or when possibly exposed to the coronavirus. This could also include, for some, updating sick leave policies and allowing employees to stay home to care for sick family members or to fulfill self-isolation requirements.

Travelers also have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. To help them fulfill this responsibility, travel businesses should offer appropriate resources to customers to better enable them to monitor and screen their own health, including:

- ✓ **Signage** communicating COVID-19 symptoms;
- ✓ **Guidance to local public health resources** in case testing or treatment is needed;
- ✓ **Materials describing good health practices** to protect themselves and others;
- ✓ **Communications encouraging travelers to stay home if they are sick** and to postpone travel until they are well.



PROMOTE HEALTH SCREENING

5 Travel businesses should establish a set of procedures aligned with CDC guidance should an employee or customer test positive for COVID-19.

Should an employee or customer test positive, **travel businesses should follow an appropriate checklist of actions in response.** Travel businesses should follow guidance from leading public health authorities to define necessary actions in these instances.



FOLLOW FOOD & BEVERAGE SERVICE GUIDANCE

6 Travel businesses should follow best practices in food and beverage service to promote health of employees and customers.

While COVID-19 is not a food borne illness, food and beverage service is an essential and ubiquitous part of the hospitality our industry provides to travelers. When serving food and beverages, travel businesses should follow [FDA's Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) and the National Restaurant Association's [COVID-19 Re-Opening Guidance](#).

They should also review the National Restaurant Association's longstanding [ServSafe guidelines](#) or comparable state program.



A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Responding effectively to COVID-19 is a shared responsibility. Our guidance reflects the essential role the travel industry must play to help promote the health and safety of our customers and employees. But no industry can overcome this challenge alone.

Travelers also have a responsibility. They must adopt new travel practices and follow science-based guidelines to help protect the health of their family and those around them, including fellow travelers and industry employees.

In the spirit of collective action needed to defeat COVID-19, we urge travelers to do their part and follow government and industry guidance to help protect themselves and others.

By working together, we can overcome the challenge, begin to reopen our economy and responsibly get America traveling again.



CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations show their support of this travel industry guidance, which will be shared with the entire travel industry and expanded upon by each sector as necessary. These organizations and their members, described below, represent the majority of the \$2.6 trillion U.S. travel industry.

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION®

U.S. Travel Association is the national, non-profit organization with more than 1,100 member organizations representing all components of the travel industry—including transportation, lodging, retail, recreation and entertainment and foodservice—across all travel segments: meetings, leisure, business, incentive and trade shows.



ACRA is the national representative for over 98% of our nation's car rental industry. ACRA's membership is comprised of over 200 companies that have almost 2.2 million registered vehicles in service in the United States, with fleets ranging in size from one million cars to ten cars.



AAAE is the world's largest professional organization for airport executives, representing thousands of airport management personnel at public-use commercial and general aviation airports. AAEE's members represent nearly 875 airports and authorities, in addition to hundreds of companies and organizations that support airports.



The Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA) is the voice of North American airports, representing local, regional and state governing bodies that own and operate commercial airports in the United States and Canada. ACI-NA is the largest of the five worldwide regions of the Airports Council International (ACI), representing more than 300 airports operating in the United States and Canada and nearly 400 aviation-related businesses.



AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the nation representing more than 19,500 members who own almost one in every two hotels in the United States.



Airlines for America®
We Connect the World

Airlines for America advocates on behalf of its members to shape crucial policies and measures that promote safety, security and a healthy U.S. airline industry. We work collaboratively with airlines, labor, Congress, the Administration and other groups to improve aviation for the traveling and shipping public. A4A vigorously advocates on behalf of the American airline industry as a model of safety, customer service and environmental responsibility and as the indispensable network that drives our nation's economy and global competitiveness.

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS



**AMERICAN
GAMING
ASSOCIATION**

AGA membership includes commercial and tribal casino operators, U.S.-licensed gaming suppliers, financial institutions, destination marketing organizations, food and beverage suppliers, and other key stakeholders in the gaming industry.



Brand USA is the nation's first public-private partnership responsible for promoting the United States as a premier travel destination. Since its founding, Brand USA has worked in close partnership with more than 900 partner organizations to promote all 50 states and U.S. territories to visitors from around the world.



AHLA is the singular voice representing 27,000 members in every segment of the hotel industry including major chains, independent hotels, management companies, REIT's, bed and breakfasts, industry partners and more.



CLIA is the world's largest cruise industry trade association, representing more than 50 cruise lines, from ocean to specialty cruise ships which comprise more than 95% of global cruise capacity. CLIA also represents key suppliers and partners to the cruise lines and 15,000 Global Travel Agency and 25,000 Travel Agent Members who include the largest agencies, hosts, franchises and consortia in the world.



ARDA is the trade association for the timeshare industry. ARDA's membership comprises over 500 companies (both privately held firms and publicly traded corporations), which house 5,000-plus individual ARDA members.



Destinations International is the world's largest association of destination organizations with approximately 600 member organizations including almost 6,000 destination professionals from around the globe.



ASTA is the world's largest association of travel professionals representing travel advisors and the companies whose products they sell such as tours, cruises, hotels, car rentals, etc.

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS



The Events Industry Council's 30+ member organizations represent over 103,500 individuals and 19,500 firms and properties involved in the events industry.



IAAPA is the premier trade association representing the attractions industry with over 6,000 member companies from over 100 countries.



IAEE is the leading association for the global exhibition industry representing over 12,000 individuals in 50 countries who conduct and support exhibitions around the world. IAEE members are directly involved in the planning, management, and production of exhibitions and buyer-seller events or those who provide products and services to the industry.



IAVM represents public assembly venues from around the globe, including managers and senior executives from auditorium, arenas, convention centers, exhibit halls, stadiums, performing arts centers, university complexes, and amphitheatres.



IFA is the world's largest membership organization for franchisors, franchisees and franchise suppliers, representing a community of over 1,400 brands.



IITA is the national nonprofit trade association representing the United States' international inbound travel industry. IITA members include inbound tour operators and suppliers (lodging companies, transportation, destinations, attractions, restaurants, etc.) from across the country.



The IMEX Group organizes two global trade shows in the meetings and events sector. Meeting industry suppliers from across the world are present at IMEX trade shows. Exhibitors include national and regional tourist offices, convention and visitor bureau, hotels, conference and exhibition centers, cruise lines, airlines, spa resorts, event management specialists and more.



Meeting Professionals International is the largest meeting planner and event planner industry association worldwide. MPI has a global community of 60,000 meeting and event professionals in 75 countries worldwide.

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS



The National Restaurant Association is the largest foodservice trade association in the world representing more than 500,000 restaurant businesses.



NTA is the leading business association for companies and organizations that serve customers traveling to, from and within North America. NTA represents 700 buyer members (tour operators and travel planners) and seller members (500 destinations and 1,100 tour suppliers).



PCMA is the world's largest, most respected and most recognized network of business events strategists. PCMA's 7,000 members are industry leaders across North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.



SISO members include companies, corporations and other for-profit entities that own, produce or provide full-service management of "face to face" trade shows, consumer shows, expositions, conferences and /or similar events as a substantial part of their business. SISO's more than 195 members are a combination of large corporations and small entrepreneurial enterprises that produce over 3,500 events worldwide.



USTOA is a professional association representing the tour operator industry. Its members are made up of companies who provide services worldwide but who conduct business in the U.S.

U.S. Travel Association's

CEO ROUNDTABLE

U.S. Travel's CEO Roundtable is comprised of 28 travel executives from America's largest travel companies with revenues in excess of \$1 billion.



U.S. Travel Association

Destinations Council

The Destinations Council represents more than 350 destination marketing organization (DMO) and convention and visitors bureau (CVB) members of U.S. Travel Association.

U.S. Travel Association

GATEWAY AIRPORTS COUNCIL

A community of more than 12 of the largest U.S. International gateway airports.



MEETINGS MEAN BUSINESS

Powered by U.S. Travel Association

Meetings Mean Business is an industry-wide coalition comprised of over 60 members who showcase the undeniable value that business meetings, trade shows, incentive travel, exhibitions, conferences and conventions bring to people, businesses and communities.

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS



U.S. Travel Association
**National Council of
Attractions and Experiences**

The council represents organizations as diverse as national parks, iconic landmarks, shopping centers, entertainment venues, world-class attractions and sightseeing tours, who are also members of U.S. Travel Association.



U.S. Travel Association
**National Council of
State Tourism Directors**

The National Council of State Tourism Directors (NCSTD), a council within the U.S. Travel Association, represents the leadership from all 50 states, the five U.S. territories and the District of Columbia.



**ENHANCED INDUSTRY-WIDE
HOTEL CLEANING STANDARDS**
in response to COVID-19.



The hotel industry has a longstanding commitment to cleanliness and safety

for our employees and guests. We continue this commitment during the public health crisis. The following health and safety guidelines represent best practices for the hotel industry, in accordance with CDC guidelines, during the re-opening phase of the economy. It is anticipated that these guidelines and protocols will evolve based on the recommendations of public health authorities and must be done in compliance with any federal, state and local laws.



Dear Valued Member,

Hospitality at its core is an industry of people taking care of people. The safety of our guests and employees has always been our number one priority. Now as we work to reopen our nation's economy, we want to ensure travelers that hotels will be cleaner and safer than ever before when they are ready to resume traveling once again.

To meet the new health and safety challenges and expectations presented by COVID-19, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) is launching *Safe Stay*. This new initiative is focused on enhanced hotel cleaning practices, social interactions, and workplace protocols, while ensuring transparency throughout the guest journey.

Safe Stay will seek to change hotel industry norms, behaviors and standards to ensure both hotel guests and employees are confident in the cleanliness and safety of hotels once travel resumes.

This initiative represents a new level of focus and transparency for an industry already built on cleanliness. Hotels have always had rigorous standards for cleaning and safety. With *Safe Stay* we are enhancing these standards to boost consumer confidence and doing so in accordance with guidance issued by public health authorities, including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

We are honored to have America's top hotel companies join us in this industry-wide effort. We look forward to the day when Americans are confident to travel freely. When that happens hotels will be ready to safely welcome everyone back. We can't wait.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chip Rogers'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chip Rogers
President & CEO

Employee & Guest Health



Washing Hands & Hand Sanitizer

[CDC guidelines](#) shall govern the duty of all hotel employees to engage in frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer. Washing hands with soap and water is the preferable method. In situations where soap/water is not available, alcohol-based sanitizer is recommended. Hand sanitizer dispensers shall include [no less than 60% alcohol content](#), where available, and touchless where possible. As available, dispensers shall be placed at key guest and employee entrances and contact areas. At a minimum, this will include lobby reception areas and employee entrances, but could also include any other reception areas, entire hotel lobby areas, restaurant entrances, meeting spaces, elevator landings, pools, exercise areas and other public areas as applicable to the property.



Front of the House Signage

During all times in which the usage of masks is recommended by the CDC and/or other local health authorities, health and hygiene reminders shall be placed at high-traffic areas on property, including the front lobby area at a minimum, indicating the proper way to wear, handle and dispose of masks.



Back of the House Signage

Signage shall be posted at a minimum in the employee break room and cafeteria, and other areas employees frequently enter or exit. Signage will remind employees of the proper way to wear, handle and dispose masks, use gloves, wash hands, sneeze and to avoid touching their faces.



Employee & Guest Health Concerns

Responding swiftly and reporting to local health officials any presumed cases of COVID-19 at the hotel property shall be a staff-wide requirement. Employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 shall remain or return home. While at work, employees who notice a coworker or guest exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 shall immediately contact a manager. At a minimum, hotels shall follow [CDC guidelines](#) for employers and businesses, including instructing employees to self-isolate for the required amount of time, as defined by the CDC, from the onset of symptoms and be symptom-free for at least three days without medication.

Well-being checks of all employees, including physical temperature checks where required by law, shall be carried out.



Case Notification

At minimum, confirmed cases of COVID-19 shall be immediately reported to [local health authorities](#) in accordance with appropriate actions recommended by the [CDC](#).

Employee's Responsibilities



Hand Cleaning

If not wearing protective gloves, all employees shall follow CDC guidance regarding handwashing. Employees shall wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, or use sanitizer when a sink is not available, after any of the following activities: using the restroom, sneezing, touching the face, cleaning, smoking, eating, drinking, accepting items from a guest (ID, cash, credit card, key card), taking a break, and before a shift and as needed throughout the shift. When possible, employees shall wear gloves for added protection and sanitation efforts. Proper hand hygiene, in accordance with CDC guidelines, should be followed prior to and after removing the gloves.



COVID-19 Training

All employees shall receive COVID-19 safety and facility sanitation protocols training recommendations from the CDC with more comprehensive training, consistent with the CDC, for employees with frequent guest contact including Housekeeping, Food & Beverage, Public Area Department, Hotel Operations, Security, Valet/Door/Bell Services, and Maintenance/Engineering.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

CDC recommendations along with federal and local government regulations shall dictate appropriate PPE to be worn by employees. PPE, along with appropriate training for use and disposal, shall be made available to any employee upon request. Please refer to OSHA for more information.

GENERAL ADVICE



WASH HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER OR SANITIZER AT LEAST 20 SEC



DRY HANDS WITH A DISPOSABLE TOWEL, DON'T SHARE TOWELS



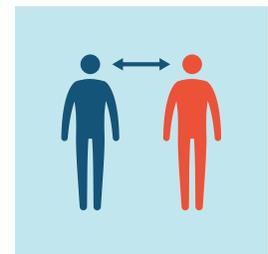
COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES WITH A TISSUE OR FLEXED ELBOW, DISPOSE TISSUES



DO NOT TOUCH EYES, NOSE, MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS



DO NOT SHARE PERSONAL OBJECTS AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS



KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE FROM OTHERS

Cleaning Products & Protocols

Cleaning products and protocols shall include [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) that meet CDC requirements for use and effectiveness against viruses, bacteria and other airborne and bloodborne pathogens. For more information, please refer to the CDC guidelines on [disinfecting buildings and facilities](#).



Public Spaces and Communal Areas

Cleaning and disinfecting shall be frequent (multiple times per day) with an emphasis on frequent contact with hard non-porous surfaces including, but not limited to, front desk check-in counters, bell desks, elevators and elevator buttons, door handles, public bathrooms, vending machines, ice machines, room keys and locks, ATMs, escalator and stair handrails, gym equipment, pool seating and surrounding areas, dining surfaces and all seating areas.



Guest Rooms

Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will require that particular attention is paid to high-touch, hard non-porous items including television remote controls, toilet seats and handles, door and furniture handles, water faucet handles, nightstands, telephones, in-room control panels, light switches, temperature control panels, alarm clocks, luggage racks and flooring. The frequency of room cleaning during a guest's stay may be altered based on guest requirements.



Laundry

Linens, towels and laundry shall be washed in accordance with CDC guidelines, including washing items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Where possible, launder items using the warmest permissible water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty linen shall be bagged in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported to the laundry facility.



Hotel Guest Elevators

Button panels shall be disinfected at regular intervals, including the beginning of each housekeeping staff work shift and continuing throughout the day.



Back of the House

Cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch areas shall occur in accordance with CDC guidelines, including at least twice per day in high traffic areas. Handwashing stations and access to hand sanitizer should be convenient and highly visible.



Shared Equipment

Shared tools and equipment shall be disinfected after each shift or transfer to a new employee.



Room Recovery Protocol

In the event of a presumptive case of COVID-19 the affected guest room shall be removed from service and quarantined. The guest room shall not be returned to service until undergoing an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting utilizing EPA approved products within CDC guidelines.



Food & Beverage

Food and beverage service shall reduce in-person contact with guests and buffet service and also minimize dining items for increased sanitation. Traditional room service shall be replaced with a no-contact delivery method. Traditional buffet service shall be limited, but when offered, it should be served by an attendant wearing personal protection equipment (PPE), and utensils should be washed and changed more frequently. Portion controls should be emphasized to reduce food exposed for long periods. Sneeze and cough screens shall be present at all food displays. Minimal items should be placed on guest tables to allow for effective disinfection in between each guest, including condiments, silverware, glassware, napkins, etc. For certain segments, the use of prepackaged foods and 'grab & go' items shall be the preferred method of food delivery.

Physical Distancing

Physical Distancing & Queuing

As recommended by the [CDC's social distancing guidelines](#), guests shall be advised to practice physical distancing by standing at least six feet away from other groups of people not traveling with them, including any area where guests or employees queue. Such areas shall be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing, and where possible, encourage one-way guest flow with marked entrances and exits. When applicable, lobby furniture and other public seating areas will be reconfigured to promote social distancing.

Guest Rooms

In anticipation of individual concerns of guests, housekeeping shall not enter a guest room during a stay unless specifically requested, or approved, by the guest, or to comply with established safety protocols. Housekeeping shall maintain the practice of cleaning rooms thoroughly following check-out.

Meeting and Convention Spaces

Meeting and banquet arrangements shall allow for physical distancing between guests based on CDC recommendations.

Hotel Front Desk, Concierge, and Parking Services

Front desk agents shall practice social distancing including utilizing every other workstation to ensure separation between employees whenever applicable and possible. The use of technology to reduce direct contact with guests, lobby population and front desk queue is encouraged, where feasible. In addition, contactless payment processes are encouraged, and when not available, employees should minimize contact as much as possible. Self-parking options should be emphasized, where possible. If valet service is provided, disinfecting of contact points within the vehicle is required. In addition, van and shuttle service shall be limited, and disinfecting of contact points will be required.

Pools and Beaches

Seating shall allow at least six feet of separation between groups of guests.

Back of the House

Physical distancing among all employees shall be practiced in employee dining rooms, uniform control areas, training classrooms, shared office spaces, and other high-density areas.

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Hotel industry health and safety protocols will be updated in accordance with CDC guidelines as we learn more about COVID-19 and ways to combat it operationally for the safety of guests and employees.





Safe Stay Advisory Council Is Comprised of Industry Leaders Representing All Segments of the Hotel Industry

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For more information about the Safe Stay Program,
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