Introduction of "Travel in the New Normal - Industry Guidance for Promoting the Health and Safety of All Travelers" by the U.S. Travel Association

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1 Introduction

The spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) is slowing down the operations of various industries, doing unprecedented damage on both international and domestic economies, and is continuing to have adverse effects. Although this war with COVID-19 is still being carried out all over the world without a foreseeable exit, in some countries and regions, guidelines for general policies and specific industries have been issued to reopen the economy and to perfectly recovery. The tourism industry is likewise taking these steps, as they have particularly had unprecedented losses.

In this report, I will offer how the US tourism industry is preparing to reopen the economy by introducing guidance from the U.S. Travel Association, titled "Travel in the New Normal - Industry Guidance for Promoting the Health and Safety of All Travelers," which was published on May 4th.

2 Preface

The preface to the guidance begins with the words, "COVID-19 represents an unprecedented challenge to the travel industry. The global pandemic adds a new dimension to our age of global travel, demanding a comprehensive response". Then, it continues strongly, "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." It also aims to give reassurance to travelers by demonstrating leadership to government and public health authorities that determine when and how to reinstate travel across the United States, and by showing that travel is properly focused on health and safety.

In the first place, the purpose of this guidance is to provide ideas for practical actions that the entire travel industry can take in resuming operations, and it envisions a phased approach that not only directly addresses the COVID-19 threats we face today, but also prepares industries to handle future threats that may arise. It requires industries to follow this guidance, and for travelers to follow health guidelines to protect their families and the people around them. The guidance is based on the report, "Guidelines for Opening up America Again," which was co-prepared by the CDC and the White House in consultation with these public health experts: Trish M. Perl, MD, Chief of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine at UT Southwestern Medical Center; and Michael D Parkinson, MD, Past President, American College of Preventive Medicine Principal.

3 Structure and Outline

The guidance consists of 5 parts and lists supporting organizations at the end. The parts are named: "Create Transmission Barriers," "Enhance Sanitation," "Promote Health Screening," "Follow Food & Beverage Service Guidance," and "A Shared Responsibility." From this point forward, we will take a look at the each part with the words taken from the guidance in verbatim.

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.

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
- 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.

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
・American Association of Airport Executives
・Asian American Hotel Owners Association
・American Car Rental Association
・Airport Council International North America
・Airlines for America
・American Gaming Association
・American Hotel & Lodging Association

・American Resort Development Association
・American Society of Travel Advisors
・Brand USA
・Cruise Lines International Association
・Destination International
・Event Industry Council
・International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions
・International Association of Exhibitions and Events
・International Association of Venue Managers
・International Inbound Travel Association
・IMEX Group
・Meeting Professionals International
・National Restaurant Association
・National Tour Association
・PCMA
・Society of Independent Show Organizers
・United States Tour Operators Association
・U.S. Travel Association's CEO Round Table
・U.S. Travel Association Destinations Council
・U.S. Travel Association Gateway Airports Council
・U.S. Travel Association Meetings Mean Business
・U.S. Travel Association National Council of Attractions and Experiences
・U.S. Travel Association National Council of State Tourism Directors

4 Conclusion

A characteristic of the West, which is not limited to the current situation with the novel coronavirus, is that each industry and organization tends to publish their own guidelines or guidance. In the case of Japan, industries and organizations all published guidelines for the novel coronavirus as a group on May 14th. Reacting in this way, by keeping pace with others, is very much a common Japanese response style for this kind of situation. Also, we cannot deny that this reaction is also due to the fact that industries must follow the government's lead. It would be desirable if the economic sector could take their own initiative.

References:
Location of this guidance.（U.S. Travel Association website）
https://www.ustravel.org/toolkit/industry-guidance-promoting-health-and-safety-all-travelers