



CWT Traveler

CURRENT NEWS AFFECTING TODAY'S BUSINESS TRAVELER

September 2008

Survey

CWT Traveler wants to know

Beginning in 2008, *CWT Traveler* would like to give readers the opportunity to weigh in on topics of relevance to travelers. Each month will highlight a single survey question, and the following month will reveal the results. Readers also have the option to submit potential survey questions to be highlighted in future issues of *CWT Traveler*. September's question is below, along with the link to submit your response.

Have any of your recent travel plans been modified or cancelled due to tropical storm and/or hurricane warnings?

- Yes
- No

Submit your response [here](#).

August survey results

The August survey question and results were as follows:

Are you willing to travel during "non-business" hours to save on airfare?

- 87% responded "Yes"
- 13% responded "No"

Green tip of the month

On the road:

Bring your own toiletries in reusable containers rather than using the small bottles provided by the hotel.

Current Events

RT program drops government threat assessments, moves to approved ID

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) recently moved the Registered Traveler (RT) airport security program beyond the 20-airport pilot test and altered RT's security function. Until now, the program included the requirement for special government pre-screening threat assessments, which is being dropped as it is seen as redundant with the use of the watch list matching that is conducted on every traveler every time they fly. The USD \$28 that had been charged to cover the TSA prescreening fee will now be lifted from dues paid for RT new enrollees.

With the elimination of prescreening, the TSA announced that RT membership cards would soon be accepted at airports as official federal identification (ID). The TSA Administrator testified during a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee hearing that...once a photo is placed on the RT card it will be the private sector equivalent of a Real ID, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security rule requiring "minimum security standards" for state-issued drivers' licenses and ID cards.

Source: *www.management.travel*

Travel tips during hurricane season

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecasts this year's hurricane season to be one of the worst. The season runs from June 1 to November 30, and the government agency now predicts 14 to 18 named storms. Regardless of the warnings, many travelers are still willing to visit destinations in high-risk areas. Below are some tips that will help travelers be safe and prepared.

- **Check in with the National Weather Service**—Review the forecasts and areas of concern. Check to ensure there is not a hurricane in the vicinity, and if there is, stay out of its way. Keep in mind that weather patterns change abruptly, so it's impossible to determine a storm's location or approach more than five to seven days in advance.
- **Know the most common hurricane locations**—The National Hurricane Center currently shows the most intense storms are most likely to hit the Caribbean, southern Louisiana, the Florida panhandle, and the Carolinas. In October the patterns typically tend to shift to Cuba and southern Florida.
- **Check flight status** in order to be more prepared and ready to change travel schedules as necessary.
- **Know the airline's ticket policy for refunds or changes**—Many airlines will allow fliers to cancel a reservation if the travel is within the dates and area of a hurricane. Refer to CWT's Airline Re-accommodation matrix at www.carlsonwagonlit.com/us, which provides an overview of North American carrier weather re-accommodation policies. For further updates, check the carrier's Website.
- **Book through corporate approved channels** in order to be located and communicated with as necessary in the event of an emergency.

- **Check on hotel policies**—Many hotels offer a hurricane guarantee, which often compensates guests with refund or rebooking options within a certain timeframe.

Additionally, information is readily available to help prepare businesses for an emergency at www.ready.gov or 1-800-BE-READY, or the U.S. Small Business Administration at <http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/index.html>.

Sources: DHS.gov, Forbes.com

Travel Tips

Traveling to Italy

Editor's note: Global business, and subsequently, global business travel, continues to expand rapidly. In response, CWT Traveler will provide to readers each month in 2008, insights and tips on traveling from North America to other countries around the world. This month's installment focuses on Italy.

In business:

- Be on time, particularly in the north.
- Italians like to do business with persons they know. Before traveling, engage a capable representative who can make introductions and appointments.
- Italians like to get acquainted before talking business, be prepared to answer questions about family.
- Make appointments between 10 and 11 a.m., and after 3 p.m.
- Women dress in understated expensive elegance; men's suits and ties are well cut and fashionable. Casual clothes are equally stylish.

Don't:

- Exchange business cards at social functions.
- Agree too strongly when a host criticizes something in their own country, and never offer negative remarks or criticisms.
- Talk about politics, religion, or World War II.
- Refuse an invitation to dining in a restaurant.
- Drink too much; Italians consider wine as a food to be sipped.
- Eat any fruits except grapes and cherries with your hand—use utensils for picking up cheese.
- Give gifts with a company's logo.
- Give an even number of flowers, or chrysanthemums, they are for funerals. Brooches, handkerchiefs, and knives all imply sadness.

Good to know:

- Italians generally conduct themselves in a refined, formal manner. Appearance, behavior, and performance reflect a refined dignity—pay attention to these details from first meeting to final departure. Investing in personal appearance and technical research will contribute to success in Italy.
- Italians have an awareness of art, science, history, literature, music, excellent meals and wine, and will respect well-educated

business people with interests and accomplishments beyond the work place.

- When scheduling visits to conduct business, consider the following: July and August find many Italian businesses closed for vacations. Almost every city celebrates the feast of its patron saint as a legal holiday. Holidays falling on Thursdays or Tuesdays often become four-day weekends. Many businesses celebrate Christmas and New Year for at least a week.
- Italian is the official language, but many business people speak English. An effort to learn and use basic greetings and pleasantries in Italian will be rewarding.

Source: "Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: The Best-selling Guide to Doing Business in More Than 60 Countries," by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway. Published by Adams Media of Avon, Massachusetts.

Preparing for upcoming airline capacity cuts

As widely reported by North American media, many airlines will reduce capacity in the next several months, including the number of flights and size of planes on certain routes. Reductions will vary by airline, market, and other factors, but travelers should be aware of the situation and consider the following actions to ensure business travel is minimally impacted:

- Plan trips and book flights as far in advance as possible. While 7-14 day advance purchase typically results in significant savings, travelers would be well served to book their travel 14-21 days before departure if possible, as they will be vying with other business and leisure travelers for fewer available seats.
- Taking flights early in the day continues to be optimal, as delays will not yet have spread across the network, and if delays do occur, travelers will have more chances to be re-routed on another flight later in the day. Conversely, travelers whose late afternoon or evening flights are delayed may have fewer opportunities to be rebooked if an airline has reduced the number of flights or seats available out of their particular market.
- In accordance with their organization's travel policy, travelers should continue to book travel only with their company's preferred airlines, hotels and car rental suppliers. In a climate where the cost of travel services is increasing, this practice provides companies the data needed to maintain current discount levels or negotiate minimal increases or even price decreases.

Sources: Carlson Wagonlit Travel, The Dallas Morning News, USA TODAY

Supplier News

Frequent-flier programs undergo changes

Thirty years ago the airlines created a marketing program that has been hugely popular and successful—frequent-flier programs. But today, with high fuel costs and airlines seeking every avenue available to offset them, the frequent-flier programs are not exempt. Carriers, including American, Continental, Delta, and United, have all made changes in their programs regarding frequent-flier mile usage. Changes range from increasing the number of miles required for a free flight or upgrade, adding a fee of as much as USD \$100 for usage, requiring a co-pay of as much as USD \$500 to acquire an upgrade, and designating some seats unavailable for program usage.

These changes, coupled with the carriers cutting of route networks and seating capacity, make the once highly valued loyalty programs less desirable. However, miles earned by flying are still the only ones that count toward elite airline status recognition and upgrades.

Source: *msnbc.msn.com*

JetBlue now charging for pillows, blankets

JetBlue has become the first American carrier to charge for pillows and blankets. The carrier has removed the previous “recycled” set and replaced them with eco friendly travel blankets and pillows. The pair will cost travelers USD \$7 on flights longer than two hours and includes a USD \$5 coupon to Bed Bath & Beyond. The set is also hypoallergenic, designed to block dust mites, mold, pollen, and pet dander.

This *a la carte* item is amongst others that many carriers have introduced within the last year, including: a charge for seats with extra leg room, fees for checked bags, ticket change fees as well as food and beverage charges.

Sources: *Baltimoresun.com, abcnews.go.com, news.yahoo.com*

Regional

DFW to offer pet hotel

Live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area? Planning to leave town and need a convenient place to house your beloved pet? Look no further. Opening next spring on the north side of the Dallas/Fort Worth airport will be a pet hotel. This pet-only hotel will cater primarily to passengers looking to drop off their pets on their way out of town.

This 24/7 operation will allow pet owners to check on pets online anytime of day through the use of webcams. The hotel will also feature boarding and grooming services, a wading pool, and a pet retail store.

Source: *USA Today, www.dallasnews.com*

International

TSA issues Venezuela travel advisory

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration (TSA) made an announcement September 8 regarding Venezuelan airport security. According to the TSA:

"The agency has been unable to assess security measures at international airports in Venezuela that serve as the last point of departure for nonstop flights to the United States. Venezuela has refused multiple requests to allow for such assessments, which are required by U.S. law, and the agency is taking action to warn travelers of this security deficiency."

Travelers purchasing tickets for travel between the United States and Venezuela should be aware of this situation. The TSA will also be posting this advisory in all U.S. airports.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is continuing to work with Venezuelan authorities to schedule the necessary visits to determine compliance with the standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Additional information can be found on the TSA [Website](#).

Source: www.tsa.gov

Air France accepting paperless boarding passes

Beginning September 3, 2008, Air France is now accepting electronic boarding passes on mobile phones. The service is currently limited to passengers on a Paris-Amsterdam-Paris flight, and requires travelers to check in via the mobile Internet site to receive the secure barcode on a mobile phone.

Personal identification must still be provided in hard copy, but the electronic barcode can be used when checking baggage, clearing security checkpoints, entering frequent flier lounges, and boarding the flight.

In the event the traveler's mobile phone malfunctions or loses power, a paper boarding pass can be printed at a self-service kiosk or by an Air France agent.

Sources: thetransnational.travel, airfrance.com

Government/Legislation

CDC travel Website is a robust traveler resource

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains a Website dedicated to keeping travelers healthy on the road and educating them about the potential health risks of the world's travel destinations: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/>. While hosted and maintained by a U.S. government entity, the global information available is equally applicable to all North American travelers.

In addition to a drop-down menu allowing travelers to select any country for which to receive health information, the Website also offers travel guides on safe drinking water, suggested and required vaccinations, receiving assistance for illness or injury abroad, and much more.

Travelers are urged to consult this and other destination-specific resources likely available from their organization's corporate travel department, before traveling, especially outside of North America. Travelers should also bookmark or save destination information for quick reference on laptops and/or handheld mobile devices.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Passport application status can be checked online

Following application for a U.S. passport, travelers can check the status of their application online. According to the U.S. State Department, it is currently taking five to seven days for an online status check of passport applications. To do so, the following is required:

- Last name, including suffixes without punctuation marks except the hyphen. For example: Jones III, Patton Jr, Jackson-Smith, O'Brien, McQueen, Varela Garcia.
- Date of birth formatted as follows: MM/DD/YYYY.
- The last four digits of Social Security Number.

Go to http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/status/status_2567.html to securely input the above information. It is recommended that the browser be closed upon completion.

Source: travel.state.gov

Technology

Airports open self-serve gadget vending machines

Best Buy Co. Inc., the nation's largest consumer electronics retailer, is partnering with ZoomSystems, a San Francisco-based vending machine company, for a pilot program called "Best Buy Express."

The plans for this project will include installation of a dozen small, automated kiosk stores inside major airports across the country. The vending machines will stock cell phone and computer accessories, along with digital cameras, portable data storage devices, headphones, travel adapters, electronic chargers, and other gadgets.

Beginning September 1, these self-serve kiosks can be found in Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis and San Francisco airports.

Sources: Minneapolis Star Tribune, USA Today

Industry Trends/Innovations

In-flight showers introduced

In-flight showers are the latest upgrade to hit the skies. Through technology, passengers can take a shower lasting up to five minutes, using between 3 and 5 gallons of water. While the added weight of the water and the high cost of the equipment likely limit the number of airlines that will embrace this new perk, at least two airlines have investigated the possibility.

Emirates and Virgin Atlantic are the first to consider or take action on this proposed luxury. Emirates has ordered 58 Airbus A380s that will include two bathrooms, each with a shower. These bathrooms will be available to the 14 passengers accommodated in the first-class cabin. Virgin Atlantic Airways also has expressed interest in this feature.

Sources: Canada.com, International Herald Tribune