



CWT Traveler

CURRENT NEWS AFFECTING TODAY'S BUSINESS TRAVELER

November 2009

Survey

CWT Traveler wants to know

CWT Traveler gives readers the opportunity to weigh in on topics of relevance to travelers. Each month a single survey question is posed, and the following month the results are revealed. Readers also have the option to submit survey questions for potential use in future issues of *CWT Traveler*. November's question is below, along with the link to submit a response.

In regard to "green" or environmentally friendly hotels, how would you describe your interest in selecting one?

- I am willing to pay more to stay at a green hotel
- If the price is comparable to other hotels I am considering, I would prefer to stay at a green hotel
- I do not consider this criterion when selecting a hotel
- Other

Submit your response [here](#).

October survey results

The October survey question and results were as follows:

How important is it to you that your rental car be "smoke free?"

- 84% responded "Very important"
- 5% responded "Somewhat important"
- 4% responded "Neutral"
- 1% responded "Somewhat unimportant"
- 6% responded "Very unimportant"
- 0% responded "I do not use rental cars"

Green Tip of the Month

At home:

Next time you're replacing a showerhead or toilet at home, consider choosing a water-saving or low-flow model.

Current Events

DOT warns airlines on noncompliant lost-baggage policies

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations require that airlines cover all expenses caused by lost or delayed baggage up to USD \$3,300 per passenger on domestic flights. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood recently stated, "We expect airlines to comply with all of our regulations and will take enforcement action if they do not."

A number of carriers have policies that limit lost-baggage compensation, including reimbursing passengers for necessities purchased only if they do so more than 24 hours after arrival, and limiting reimbursements to outbound trips, according to DOT's Aviation Enforcement Office. Airlines were told to review handouts and contracts to assure they are in compliance with DOT regulations, and that enforcement action will be taken for noncompliance.

Sources: *atwonline.com, consumeraffairs.com*

EPA cracks down on airline tap water

After analyzing drinking water on 327 airliners in 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that 15 percent tested positive for the presence of coliform bacteria, which are usually not harmful but an indicator of the presence of disease-causing germs. Last month, the EPA issued final rules regarding aircraft tap water. Airlines must now routinely monitor, disinfect and flush water in order to meet quality standards. They will have up to two years to comply with the new rules.

What should travelers do?

Today, the EPA suggests that passengers with suppressed immune systems or other concerns may wish to request bottled water or canned beverages while on the aircraft and refrain from drinking tea or coffee not made with bottled water. Travelers who do not have a suppressed immune system, but are still concerned about water quality, should avoid drinking any water from the airplane's water system, including coffee or tea prepared on board.

Detailed information regarding the EPA "Aircraft drinking water rule" can be found at www.epa.gov/ogwdw/airlinewater/regs.html.

Sources: *USA Today, Bloomberg.com, scrippsnews.com, epa.gov*

Travel Tips

Traveling to Taiwan

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

Good to know:

- Taiwan is a multiparty republic.
- Traditional Mandarin Chinese is the official language; many businesspeople speak English.
- A passport valid for at least six months following date of entry is required for travel to Taiwan.
- To prevent communicable diseases, all arriving passengers are scanned with an infrared thermal apparatus.
- Taiwan is 13 hours ahead of North America Eastern Standard Time (EST).
- Chopsticks are used for eating and a porcelain spoon is used for soup. At the end of the meal, the chopsticks are laid on the table, never on the bowl.
- Point with an open hand, as pointing with a single finger is considered rude.

In business:

- Always be punctual. Be prepared for a slower pace and delays.
- Business cards should be printed in English on one side and Mandarin Chinese on the other. Cards are treated with respect as they indicate a person's rank.
- Business dress is conservative for both men and women.
- A handshake is the most common form of greeting.
- Use both hands when giving or receiving a gift. The gift is opened later, not in the presence of the giver.

Sources: travel.state.gov; "Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: The Bestselling Guide to Doing Business in More Than 60 Countries", by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway. Published by Adams Media of Avon, Massachusetts.

H1N1 impact continues

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "As of 1 November 2009, worldwide more than 199 countries and overseas territories/communities have reported laboratory confirmed cases of pandemic influenza H1N1 2009, including over 6000 deaths."

While H1N1 is the dominant influenza strain in most parts of the world today, it is considered no more dangerous for otherwise healthy adults than seasonal flu. Consequently, WHO does not recommend limiting or restricting travel or closing borders at this time.

CWT recommends travelers consider the following actions:

Pre-trip

- Study destination-specific information and alerts
- Consult company travel policy and crisis management procedures
- Know personal health insurance policy relative to travel
- Delay travel if ill

Preventive health measures

- Maintain a distance of at least 3 feet (1 meter) from people with influenza-like symptoms
- Reduce time spent in crowded settings

- Clean hands thoroughly and often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
- Refrain from handshaking, hugging and kissing; infected people may start spreading the virus before they show signs of illness

In the event of illness

- Avoid contact with others if possible; if not, maintain a distance of at least 3 feet (1 meter)
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Dispose of tissues and clean your hands immediately after
- Wear a mask to contain the spread of droplets and be sure to use it correctly

Symptoms may include fever, cough, headache, sore throat, chills, fatigue, muscle and joint pain, severe feelings of malaise, and runny or stuffy nose. More severe symptoms that may require immediate medical attention include shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, severe chest pains, weakness or inability to stand, sudden dizziness or confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, fever that lasts three or more days.

Additional information is available via the WHO [website](#).

Sources: Carlson Wagonlit Travel, who.int

Supplier News

Several major U.S. carriers add surcharge for busiest travel days

The most expensive travel days just became more costly. Several major U.S. airlines recently announced a USD \$10 each-way surcharge for busy travel days around holidays—and then many subsequently increased that number to USD \$20 each way.

The fee applies to many flights scheduled for the peak travel days surrounding the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holidays.

Sources: msnbc.msn.com, The Associated Press

Business-class fares drop in both price and demand

Some airlines have reduced business-class fares to foreign cities in an effort to fill those more expensive seats. Many business-class airfares from the United States to Europe are 33 percent to 66 percent cheaper than a year ago, according to an analysis initiated by USA TODAY.

The study analyzed "every business-class airfare for non-stop, round-trip flights in late October between five U.S. cities with the most departing international passengers and five cities outside North America with the most passengers from the USA."

Key findings from the analysis included the following:

- From New York, Miami, Chicago, and Atlanta to London, nearly all airlines' business-class fares are 25 percent to 55 percent cheaper than in late October 2008. From Los Angeles to London, all airlines' business-class fares are about 35 percent cheaper.
- Business-class fares to Paris from Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Atlanta are about 30 percent less than last October on most airlines.
- From New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Atlanta, business-class tickets on all airlines are about 35 percent cheaper to Amsterdam and 25 percent cheaper to Tokyo.

Despite these trends, the cheaper fares are still a tough sell. The economy has forced some companies to direct employees to buy only coach tickets, which traditionally are one-fourth to one-eighth the price of business-class tickets.

Airlines rely on premium fliers for 25 percent to 30 percent of revenue, but the number of those fliers fell 20 percent during the first seven months of this year according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The number of people traveling in first and business class worldwide was down 12 percent in August compared with the same period a year earlier, according to the IATA. Businesses are expected to keep a close eye on travel expenses for the foreseeable future.

Sources: ABC News, USA TODAY, North Jersey.com, iata.org

Regional

LAX receives approval for upgrades

Last month, the Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners awarded two contracts totaling USD \$1.26 billion, for the upcoming modernization of the Tom Bradley International Terminal in the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The improvement project—scheduled to take four years and create 4,000 construction-related jobs—is said to be the biggest public works project in Los Angeles history.

Nearly 35 airlines currently operate from the terminal, which is LAX's primary facility serving international travelers. The terminal upgrades will include:

- New boarding gates and passenger loading bridges
- Concourses with larger passenger lounges
- Aircraft support equipment to accommodate new, larger aircraft like the Airbus A380 and the Boeing B787
- Improvements to the Federal Inspection Service/Customs and Border Protection Facilities
- Addition of secured corridors between Terminals 3 and 4 and the Tom Bradley International Terminal so passengers do not need to exit and re-enter the secured area

- New space for food/beverage, retail concessions, and other passenger amenities beyond passenger security screening—totaling 1.25 million square feet

The upgrades are scheduled for completion in 2012 and 2013.

Sources: *Travel Weekly, USA TODAY, lawa.org*

International

Competition for crossing the English Channel in 2010?

Eurostar's status as the exclusive rail operator using the tunnel beneath the English Channel—the Chunnel—ends in January, and it may be getting some competition. Air France announced in 2008 a competing high-speed rail service between London and Paris to begin in 2010 on the same tracks but at a higher speed. Given the slow economy, this project may face some delays.

Today, more persons travel between London and Paris by Eurostar, a joint service of the Belgian, British, and French railways, than by air. It is a 20-minute, 100-mile-an-hour, 24-mile trip—and it is said to be greener than flying.

Source: *Chicago Tribune*

Government/Legislation

DHS report says TRIP does little for redress seekers

In a report dated September 11 and released in October, the Traveler Redress Inquiry Program—TRIP—"in most cases" had done little to improve the situation of the travelers who used the program. This is according to a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) inspector general.

DHS launched TRIP in 2007 as a one-stop shop for travelers listed on the no-fly watch lists in error, or those whose name closely matched a name on the list. The program was intended to efficiently alleviate the complications these travelers would undergo at the airport. While acknowledging that TRIP has brought some centralization and improvements to government traveler redress efforts, Inspector General Richard Skinner found, "Redress-seekers generally do not benefit from their participation in TRIP...Their cases languish for extended periods and are handled inconsistently...sometimes...not brought to the attention of the appropriate agency. In other instances, cases are closed before all indicated agencies have had a chance to review them. Even when cases are properly reviewed, they do not usually produce meaningful results..." He cited room for improvement in security, privacy, reliability, timeliness, performance management, and others.

DHS agreed with 20 of the 24 recommendations in the inspector general's report, saying some solutions could come into play yet this year, however,

said Skinner, "a number of its proposed plans focus on solutions that will take more than a year to develop, rather than near-term corrective actions consistent with the pressing nature of the underlying issues."

DHS said the Secure Flight program would negate some of the issues, as it will dramatically reduce the number of falsely flagged travelers.

In a statement, National Business Travel Association (NBTA) executive director and COO Michael McCormick said, "NBTA has supported Secure Flight to improve the watch list matching used by airlines but believes the DHS, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and airlines should not wait for Secure Flight to be fully operational to help affected travelers. These weaknesses are one reason NBTA has supported the FAST Redress Act passed by the House of Representatives earlier this year, which would clarify how the redress process should operate, expand the areas where redress can be offered and improve the likelihood of obtaining necessary redress funding."

Most of the issues for which redress is sought are for air travel, but the program also addresses situations for points of entry and visa and passport issues. The program involves nine DHS entities as well as departments of State and Justice.

Sources: *btnonline.com, dhs.gov*

Technology

Real-time flight delay information available online

With the holiday season approaching and winter weather also a concern, airport delays are a growing concern for travelers. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) now provides information regarding delays through its website, www.fly.faa.gov.

Managed by the FAA's central command center, the site contains real-time, detailed information on flight status at 40 U.S. airports. For each airport, there is a summary of delays by destination, as well as general departure and arrival delays. Current average delay times and the reason for the delay can be obtained by clicking on the airport within the interactive map.

Created with the traveling public in mind, www.fly.faa.gov has received numerous awards, including the Center of Excellence for Information Technology (CEIT) award. The site does not, however, include airline related tie-ups due to mechanical, crew, or other problems. For this reason the FAA also advises travelers to check on their actual flight's status with the airlines.

For information regarding delays at airports outside the United States, www.flightstats.com offers interactive maps including detailed airport and weather information for various locations.

Sources: *faa.gov, flightstats.com*

Industry Trends/Innovations

Travelers drawn to 'green' features that do not add cost

According to a quarterly survey by the U.S. Travel Association and Ypartnership, U.S. travelers have become more environmentally conscious over the past two years, but only a minimal number are actually willing to pay an additional cost for "eco-friendly travel."

The survey results showed that 78 percent of US travelers consider themselves environmentally conscious, and 54 percent are familiar with the term "carbon footprint." Only 9 percent reported being willing to pay more for green travel options.

Some travel suppliers have implemented green practices that deliver results without adding significant costs for their business or their customers. Examples that hotels have implemented include recycling; encouraging re-use of towels and sheets; and switching to more efficient uses of energy and water, such as compact fluorescent light bulbs and low-flow showerheads.

Sources: *atwonline.com, tia.org*

Europe begins plan to end liquid, gel ban

The European Union (EU) is making plans to end the ban on liquids and gels carried on board airplanes through use of security technology. The European Commission is considering requiring major EU airports to install such technology to screen and detect explosive material in gels and liquids by April 2012, with a goal of 2014 to end the present ban.

Source: *atwonline.com*