

# COVID survey identifies airline strategies to increase pax confidence

The world's leading airlines are actively engaged in boosting traveler confidence during the pandemic, according to a new survey into the health and safety measures of 25 leading carriers.

The research examined the key confidence-building features identified on airline websites during June 2020. The review was conducted by IdeaWorksCompany, the ancillary revenue specialist, and sponsored by CarTrawler, the leading B2B provider of car rental and mobility solutions to the global travel industry.

All airlines in the survey, with the exception of Qantas, require passengers to wear face coverings. Air France, as a result of home government regulation, requires passengers to upgrade to surgical masks.

The passenger cabins of the world's airline fleet are being kept clean with spray-wipe-repeat activity. Without exception, carriers describe a cleaning regimen occurring before flights and becoming more robust during overnight stops. AirAsia lists the names of the three chemicals used. Emirates Airline adds an extra crew member on longer flights dedicated to cleaning lavatories.

Electrostatic antiviral spraying, widely used by US-based airlines, dispenses disinfectant with a mild positive electrical charge. The small particles are then attracted to cabin surfaces as these have a natural neutral or negative charge. This is an effective method to coat every surface such as overhead bins, seats, air nozzles and light controls, and tray tables.

## **Prioritizing passenger health and safety**

Care kits for travelers provided free of charge to passengers may include elements such as a face mask, sanitizing wipes, and sanitizing liquid.

When it comes to temperature check requirements, these checks are sometimes administered by an airline (such as Air Canada and Frontier) or by airport authorities, especially at major hub locations.

"It's hugely encouraging to see the proactive and sensible measures airlines are taking to prioritize passenger health and safety," said Aileen McCormack, Chief Commercial Officer at CarTrawler, the research sponsor.

"The travel industry has been hit hard, but these measures signal positive momentum and will provide consumers with the confidence and peace of mind they're seeking."

# CarTrawler Summary of Confidence-Building Measures Related to the Pandemic

## 25 Leading Global Network and Low Cost Carriers

Carrier Based in:	Leading 25 Carriers	Features specifically referenced at airline websites					
		Spray and Wipe Disinfect	Electro-static Antiviral	Face Covering Required	Care Items for Travelers	Temp. Check Required	Others – See Codes
Asia/ Pacific	AirAsia	■		■		■	CB HS SD
	Air China	■		■		■	SD
	Cathay Pacific	■		■		■*	HS
	Korean Air	■		■		■*	PE SD
	Qantas	■			■		HS
	Singapore	■		■	■	■*	HS PE SD
Europe	Air France/KLM	■	AF only	■ AF+		■*	HS (AF only)
	British Airways	■		■	■		HS
	easyJet	■	■	■		■*	HS SD
	Lufthansa	■		■	■		CB HS
	Ryanair	■	■	■		■*	
	Turkish	■		■	■	■*	CB HS PE SD
Middle East	Emirates	■	■	■	■	■*	CB PE
	Qatar Airways	■		■	soon	■*	HS PE
Latin America	Avianca	■	■	■	■		HS
	LATAM Airlines	■	■	■			HS SD
North America	Air Canada	■	■	■	■	■	HS
	Alaska Group	■	■	■	■		HS MS
	American	■	■	■			HS
	Delta	■	■	■			HS MS
	Frontier	■	■	■		■	
	JetBlue	■	■	■			HS MS
	Southwest	■	■	■	■		HS MS
	Spirit	■	■	■			
United	■	■	■	■		HS	

\*Varies by departure airport, route, or geographic region.

AF+ Surgical mask required on Air France per French government regulation. CB – Special cabin baggage restrictions. HS – Hand sanitizer provided at some or all airport locations. MS – Middle seat kept empty for a limited period of time. PE – Protective clothing and/or visors for cabin crew. SD – Spraying or fogging with disinfectant (not electrostatic).

Data source: IdeaWorksCompany review of airline websites June 2020.

This chart displays the health and safety measures of 25 leading carriers by region

The review of COVID-19 policies also revealed additional confidence-building measures. The following are listed by the two-letter code in the right-hand column of the chart printed on this page:

Cabin baggage restrictions (CB): Roll-on baggage and other large pieces add extra time in the aisle for passengers as they load their overhead bin. Airlines restrict carry-on bags to create a safer and less congested boarding and deplaning process.

Hand sanitizer (HS): The table reflects airlines that indicate the availability of hand sanitizer in gate areas and on aircraft. Gate area supplies might be courtesy of airport operators.

Middle seat kept empty (MS): Having an empty middle seat feels safer, but in reality the safety benefit is likely negligible, the survey said, noting that this appears to be a US trend and the courtesy will be short-lived as aircraft loads increase.

Protective equipment for cabin crew (PE): Beyond the provision of a higher quality mask, some airlines provide cabin crew with clear face shields or goggles, and plastic blouses/aprons. This provides protection for passengers, and especially for cabin crew who encounter hundreds of passengers during a work day.

Spraying or fogging disinfectant (SD): Videos developed by airlines display workers in protective body suits spraying disinfectant in aircraft cabins between flights or during overnight stops. The disinfectant lands on surfaces, such as fabric seating, armrests, and carpets, and provides long-term protection. Depending upon the type of chemical used, some airlines disclose viral protection may last 30 days between application. If an airline did not disclose it uses electrostatic methods (or this was not obvious from the video) the method was listed as spraying or fogging.

### **Efforts exceed regulatory requirements**

The chart majors on the prevalent methods used by airlines to increase traveler confidence during the pandemic. Plenty of additional examples were revealed during the review of airline websites. Singapore Airlines promises to launder all cabin supplies, such as headrest covers and blankets, at high temperature after every flight. Turkish Airlines says it will avoid the use of bus transfers for departures and arrivals. The airline also describes a structured arrival process which deplanes 10 passengers at a time with two-minute waiting intervals to reduce aisle congestion. On longer domestic flights, United Airlines' cabin crew distributes an "all-in-one" snack bag that includes a wrapped sanitizer wipe, 8.5-ounce bottled water, Stroopwafel, and package of pretzels.

Not every airline was found to be forthcoming with a description of its confidence-building procedures. While change and cancel fee waiver details were easily found, information regarding COVID-19 safety procedures was sometimes difficult to find or offered insufficient detail, the survey authors said. Air Canada was found to be the best with good explanatory videos and a helpful step-by-step guide for preparing for travel. Singapore Airlines offers a very thorough online e-brochure for information on health and safety issues.

The scale of effort by the world's airlines to build traveler confidence during the pandemic is impressive, and often exceeds regulatory requirements, the researchers concluded, adding: "It's the cabin crew who ultimately deliver the promise of traveler safety and comfort. Let's hope travelers all treat cabin crew with kindness and respect, even if they feel pandemic-related measures are inconvenient or intrusive. After all, the primary concern of cabin crew has always been the safety of their passengers, even at the risk of their own lives."

CarTrawler, which sponsored the research, is the leading B2B provider of car rental and mobility solutions to the global travel industry. Its technology platform seeks to expand its airline and travel partners' offering to their customers, creating ancillary revenue opportunities. CarTrawler creates data-led solutions for customers including Alaska Airlines, easyJet, KLM and Emirates.

IdeaWorksCompany, which gathered the survey data, aims to boost airline profits through innovations in ancillary revenue, a la carte pricing, and loyalty marketing. It is a global resource for ancillary revenue strategy, on-site executive workshops, and research reports.