

Direct Travel Industry Updates

June 30, 2022

Direct Travel would like to make you aware of the current state of the travel industry and how this is impacting travel management companies (TMCs) like Direct Travel. We have also attached some helpful traveler tips and things to consider when planning for upcoming travel.

What is Happening in the Travel Industry

Due to many factors, the travel industry is experiencing an overwhelming number of disruptions. Notable complications include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Thousands of flight delays and cancellations occurring each day,
- Extended airline call wait times,
- Lengthy airport security lines,
- Delayed passport, Nexus and Trusted Traveler turnaround timelines, and
- Ground transportation challenges including car rental constraints.

You can read more about the travel industry's current situation via the below link. Please keep in mind that the situation is fluid and subject to change.

- U.S. publications:
 - [USA Today: As U.S. Flight Delays, Cancellations Pile Up, What's Going On?](#)
 - [New York Post: Over One-Third of All Flights at LaGuardia Airport Canceled Thursday](#)
- Canadian publications:
 - [Global News: As Summer Travel Heats Up, How to Navigate Delays at Home and Abroad](#)
 - [CBC: Airlines, Ottawa and Unions Blamed for Travel Delays](#)
 - [Air Canada: Air Canada Comments on Aviation Industry Summit with Federal Transport Minister](#)

How This is Affecting TMCs

As a result of the industry's current state, we have seen the following industry trends directly impact TMC service levels:

- Average call times have increased by 150%.
- The volume of incoming calls per booking has increased by 100%.

- The volume of support requests requiring travel advisor intervention has amplified with the increased number of airline cancelations.
- Airline staffing levels and hold times will impact a TMC when an advisor must coordinate with the carrier.

While these industry issues have affected our service output, we remain committed to providing the best possible service. By approaching service with consideration and personalization, our travel advisors have reinforced the significance of their [role](#). They continue to carry out Direct Travel's mission to do "Whatever It Takes" for our clients and their travelers each and every day.

Additional steps we are taking include:

- Reviewing all client interaction types to ensure maximum efficiency in meeting traveler needs, (e.g., using automation where possible so that travel advisors can free up availability for the more complex and intricate immediate needs), and
- Resourcing optimal talent within the industry, while also taking into consideration evolving client needs.

How Travelers Can Best Prepare for Upcoming Travel

The attached document provides helpful traveler tips to keep in mind when planning upcoming travel. Please feel free to distribute it to your traveler base.

Should you have any questions, please reach out to your account manager.



Direct Travel's Tips for Travelers

Here are some things you can do to ease your travel experience throughout the summer.

- **Plan much further ahead:** Book your travel as far in advance as possible. Consider selecting early-morning flights, as they tend to delay less often. If you are traveling to attend an important meeting or event, consider planning to arrive a day earlier. Also, keep the following in mind:
 - Arrive to the airport much earlier when your travel day arrives. Airlines provide “when to arrive at the airports” information as some major/hub airports require additional time due to higher volume of travelers and processing times. Click [here](#) to check your airport arrival and check-in times.
 - Check in to your flight online 24 hours prior to your flight’s departure time.
 - Verify your airline’s check-in and baggage drop-off requirements.
- **Renew passports earlier:** If your passport is approaching a renewal date, start the renewal process right away. There are reported delays in passport administration, however some programs have extended their validity periods to buffer the backlogs. Invest in Nexus, TSA PreCheck or Global Entry to expedite the security clearance process.
- **Prior to booking, review your travel profile:** Check to make sure your travel profile is correct and up-to-date. Make sure your frequent flyer and guest numbers are complete and accurate, your credit card information is valid and your passport is current.
- **Use your online booking tool (OBT) to book travel:** By using your OBT to book your travel, you can avoid extended service call times.
- **At the time of booking, consider extending connecting times:** This will present a better chance to make your connecting flight should there be a delay in your previous flight.
- **Review your reservations:** Upon receipt of your itinerary, immediately check to ensure all details – including name spelling, date, time and seat assignment – are correct. Verify that you have all the proper travel documents required for your trip. Always select your seat assignment if your fare allows or pay for your seat to ensure it is confirmed at time of booking.
- **Consider travel insurance options:** Travel insurance may help you avoid costly out-of-pocket fees.
- **Plan alternative methods of transportation to and from the airport:** Due to high congestion and reported full lots at most airports, leave early, and if possible, plan to be dropped off by someone you know or arrange a taxi or Uber. Pre-book your taxi or Uber in advance. Driver shortages are causing delays for on-demand calls. If you choose to drive yourself, we recommend you consider ‘off-airport’ parking options, such as Park ‘n Fly, due to limited spaces at airport parking facilities, and off-airport parking rates are much more economical.
- **Avoid checked baggage:** Consider using carry-on luggage as opposed to checked baggage to avoid congested bag drop-off lines. Be sure that your carry-on luggage meets airline requirements. If you do take check-in baggage, you should also bring a carry-on bag packed with essential items in case your checked luggage is delayed or lost. Also, be prepared for possible delays in baggage handling for checked bags; Due to airline staffing shortages, there have been reported delays in loading and unloading checked baggage on and off the planes. This has resulted in missing luggage or lengthy delays in baggage offloading.
- **Prepare for hotel and car rental contingencies:** Due to industry staffing shortages, some hotel services, restaurants/bars and housekeeping may be unavailable or limited. Be prepared, and confirm which options are available. If you are unable to secure a car rental for airport pick-up, consider off-airport locations for pick-up and drop-off (e.g., near your hotel).