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What to Know About COVID-19 and Colorado Travel

Recommended Messaging

TOPLINE MESSAGE: To support the Colorado economy, keep articulating that the state is open for business. Encourage residents and visitors to take control by taking reasonable precautions to prevent transmission of flu viruses. Encourage those most at risk — those who are frail, elderly, chronically ill — to take stronger precautions to avoid infection. Urge facts over fear. The hospitality/travel sector — Colorado’s second largest employer — is the sector most at risk from COVID-19 impacts. Mass cancellations threaten the livelihoods of hotel, restaurant and transportation workers, as well as business earnings and tax receipts.

Recommended Talking Points

Travel Recommendations

The Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) understands travelers may be concerned about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it may affect them.

The CTO and the U.S. Travel Association are committed to ensuring that travelers are provided with accurate, updated information about public health conditions in Colorado.

*The travel industry’s guiding principle is to seek and heed the most up-to-date expert guidance, and we urge the traveling public to do the same.

While the U.S. government has not suggested limiting domestic travel or imposing restrictions on international inbound travel beyond those already in place, this is a rapidly evolving situation.

*Federal public health officials have issued NO warnings or restrictions on travel anywhere in the U.S.

- U.S. officials have restricted travel FROM certain countries with pronounced coronavirus outbreaks and is screening arrivals to the U.S. who may have traveled in affected areas in the last 14 days. Entry of foreign nationals from China and Iran has been suspended at this time.
- The U.S. Department of State has posted advisories about traveling TO specific countries and regions and recently upgraded their warnings for Italy, South Korea and Iran to level 3—avoid nonessential travel, which also still applies to mainland China.
- For the latest travel alerts and warnings, visit the CDC webpage, [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel](#).

Precautions for Travelers

The CTO is in contact with the Colorado Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment. With this evolving situation, we encourage the traveling public to follow any guidance offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and these public health authorities.

When it comes to the American public, the CDC is consistent in its precaution to practice everyday preventative measures to help stop the spread of germs, as is typical in the current flu and respiratory disease season.

U.S. health officials are urging the same personal best practices that are standard for typical flu season:

- Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- Getting a flu shot if you haven't gotten one this year

With the situation evolving rapidly, we encourage the traveling public to follow any guidance offered by the CDC and local and state public health authorities.

Impact on Colorado Travel Industry

With no travel restrictions to Colorado in place, domestic and most international travelers should not be discouraged from continuing to plan and take vacations in the state.

Inbound tourism to Colorado from China represents *29,305 visitors — 2.8 percent of Colorado's international visitors. By comparison, 20 percent come from Mexico, 19 percent from Canada and 7.5 percent from the UK.

*At this time, U.S. airlines have canceled flights to/from mainland China until April 24, 2020. However, cases of COVID-19 in China have now stabilized, factories are opening once again and people are returning to work. Flights within China are now operating above 50% of capacity, and bookings at tour operators have increased 70% week over week. Most trips that have been postponed are now planned for May and June.

Travel industry leaders will continue to engage health and security authorities on any planned or anticipated coronavirus-related measures that would impact travel.

Additional Travel Restriction Details from U.S. Travel Association

*U.S. Travel released its monthly **Travel Trends Index** the first to include data on the impact of coronavirus on international inbound travel to the U.S. The predictive component of TTI projects that international inbound travel to the U.S. will fall by 6% over the next three months, the largest decline since the 2007-08 financial crisis. You can read the **full TTI** on USTA's website.

Resources

Center for Disease Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment COVID-19 Info:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus>

General questions about COVID-19:

Call CO-Help at 303-389-1687 or 1-877-462-2911 or email COHELP@RMPDC.org, for answers in English and Spanish (Español), Mandarin (普通), and more.

CDC: [2019 Novel Coronavirus web page](#)

CDC: [Novel coronavirus information for travelers](#)

The U.S. Travel Association

[Emergency Preparedness and Response: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

*New talking point as of 3/4

Additional Information for the Tourism Industry

MMGY believes impacts on travel will worsen in the short-term (into summer) before it improves, but also expects a quick demand spike once fears of the virus recede. It's very likely that booking cycles will condense dramatically for summer, as travelers will wait to make final decisions, based on the virus's spread.

This could present an opportunity, as it did with both SARS and Swine Flu. Vacationers this year may choose to drive rather than fly, or choose to travel domestically rather than internationally. MMGY reports several hotel companies are pivoting to address such opportunities to attract leisure travelers. **CTO will monitor these trends and adjust marketing strategy accordingly. CTO is particularly well-positioned to leverage road-trip interest, with about 200 itineraries on the Colo-Road Trips microsite.**

Smart travelers will be on the alert for outstanding travel bargains. This likely will be a good year for consumers to secure travel value, and presents an opportunity for promotion.

There is resiliency in travel. Typically, a trough during a crisis is followed by a strong rebound. Hotel room demand surged in 2004 after SARS, international travel to the U.S. increased 12%, domestic demand increased 4%.

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