

What you need to know: Airline cleanliness & hygiene: North America

October 2, 2020

In an effort to reassure travelers that they are doing all they can to protect them against COVID-19, airlines are implementing new and improved cleanliness and hygiene processes. In some cases, these measures may differ from the hygiene procedures implemented by individual airports.

This report summarizes what North American airlines are doing.

U.S. carriers

American Airlines

To give passengers the peace of mind to travel, American Airlines has enhanced its cleaning procedures and added new safety and hygiene protocols at every step in the journey, which it details on its website under Travel with confidence:¹

Check-in

- Enhanced cleaning of kiosks, ticket counters, passenger service counters and baggage service offices
- Commercial-grade plexiglass shields at ticket counters
- Agents located at alternating workstations and turning off some kiosks to create more space
- All employees wear face coverings
- Physical distancing encouraged throughout check-in and security areas
- Hand sanitizing stations installed in select locations

In the lounges

- Enhanced cleaning and sanitization of all areas
- Touchless entry to lounges, with foot-operated devices installed in some restrooms
- Signs and floor markers encourage social distancing
- Commercial-grade plexiglass shields at reception and service desks
- Packaged snacks, a full-bar service with an option to order via a mobile app

At the departure gate

- Gate and seating area cleaned more frequently
- Commercial-grade plexiglass shields at boarding gates and service desks
- Hand sanitizer stations installed
- Physical distancing encouraged during boarding
- Passengers scan mobile or printed boarding pass
- Passengers must wear a face covering before boarding

Onboard the flight

- Expanded use of EPA-approved, hospital-grade disinfectant
- HEPA filters fitted on all mainline aircraft and most regional jets

¹ [American Airlines](#), Travel with confidence

- Deep cleaning of tray tables, seatbelt buckles, armrests, window shades, seatback screens, doors and overhead bin handles
- Hand sanitizing wipes or gels available on most international flights and some domestic flights over 900 miles
- All passengers over the age of two years must wear a face covering at the airport and onboard, except when eating and drinking
- Limited food and drink service in the main cabin. Snack bags available during boarding on some longer flights. Passengers are welcome to bring their own food and beverages on board.
- Enhanced cleaning in catering kitchens, food preparation areas, catering carts and catering vehicles

On July 17, American expanded its contactless offering by introducing a touchless check-in process for passengers checking baggage on domestic flights.² When checking in via the airline's app or website, passengers indicate the number of bags being checked in. Once at the airport, they scan a mobile or printed boarding pass at a kiosk to print their luggage tags. The technology is available at 230 airports.

From October 15, 2020, American Airlines offered passengers COVID-19 testing prior to travel to Hawaii from Dallas, to Jamaica from Miami and to the Bahamas, with plans to extend the service to other Caribbean destinations.³ American has partnered with home health testing provider LetsGetChecked. Passengers test at home, monitored virtually by medical professionals, with results typically returned within 48 hours. The test costs \$129. American is also working with healthcare provider CareNow for passengers to be tested either at a CareNow urgent care location or at Dallas/Fort Worth airport.

Delta Air Lines

Delta has created the Delta CareStandardSM to keep both passengers and staff safe and healthy. By combining Delta CareStandard's focus on cleanliness, more space, safer service, personal care and greater flexibility with partnerships with industry-leading experts, Delta aims to set a new standard of care in the travel industry.

As part of the Delta CareStandard branded cleanliness experience, the airline organizes its online content under "Travel Well." Key components are detailed below:

Check-in

- All customers must wear a face mask
- Kiosks frequently wiped down and sanitized
- Hand sanitizer stations installed near high-traffic and high-touch locations
- All customer-facing employees must wear face masks and have temperatures checked before reporting for work
- Customer service counters sanitized frequently and equipped with Plexiglass shields
- Baggage stations wiped down and sanitized frequently
- Floor decals help passengers keep a safe distance in queues

At the end of July, Delta enhanced its check-in process by adding a health acknowledgement, which passengers must complete.⁴ Passengers must indicate that they have not been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 within the past two weeks and have not experienced any of the main symptoms

² [Business Travel News](#), July 17, 2020

³ [Business Travel News](#), September 29, 2020

⁴ [Business Travel News](#), July 29, 2020

within that period. They must also confirm that they will wear a mask throughout their journey. Passengers failing to complete the declaration will be unable to complete check-in and will be prompted to cancel or change their reservation with fees waived.

Security checkpoints

- TSA security checkpoints sanitized with electrostatic of high-grade disinfectant
- Security trays wiped down and sanitized frequently
- Customers and TSA employees must wear face masks
- Alternating security lanes used when available
- Hand sanitizer stations placed near exits

Delta Sky Club

- Electrostatic spray sanitization every night
- All staff must wear face masks and gloves; travelers must wear masks
- Plexiglass screens installed where face-to-face service is necessary
- Hand sanitizer stations installed near high-traffic and high-touch locations
- Menu options modified with “grab & go” selections
- Designated seating areas reserved for families traveling together
- Lounge capacity limited with seats blocked to promote safe distancing
- Floor decals help passengers keep a safe distance
- All restrooms and food and bar areas wiped down and sanitized multiple times per day

Boarding

- Gate areas and jet bridges sanitized with electrostatic spraying
- All customers must wear a face mask; extra masks and Care Kits are available at the gate
- Plexiglass screens installed at counters, which are wiped down frequently
- Employees must wear face masks
- Use Fly Delta app to scan boarding pass for touchless boarding, App also notifies when aircraft have been sanitized and inspected before boarding
- Jet bridges wiped down and sanitized frequently
- Boarding back to front, 10 customers at a time
- Hand sanitizer stations installed near high-traffic and high-touch locations

On board

- An extensive cleaning checklist is followed
- Before every flight, all aircraft are sanitized using electrostatic spraying
- Toilets are extensively cleaned and sanitized after every flight
- Overhead bins and armrests are sanitized before every flight
- Until September 30, middle seats have been blocked and the total number of passengers per flight has been reduced
- All aircraft are fitted with HEPA filters
- Customers must wear masks throughout the entire duration of the flight, except for eating and drinking
- Passengers deplane in groups, organized by flight attendants

The seat

- Complimentary Care Kits – face mask, sanitizing wipe – available on request
- Tray tables and seatback screens are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before every flight

- All non-essential items, such as the inflight magazine and glassware, have been removed
- Food and beverage options have been reduced

Baggage claim

- Baggage claim area in all domestic locations sanitized with electrostatic spraying
- Floor decals promote safer distancing
- Hand sanitizers near all domestic baggage carousels
- Baggage service office counters sanitized and equipped with Plexiglass shields

To provide additional safety and COVID-19 infection control measures for customers and employees, Delta is collaborating with Mayo Clinic, a global leader in serious and complex medical care.⁵ The airline has also established a partnership with Lysol parent company Reckitt Benckiser to enhance its hygienic protocols.⁶ Delta plans to work with Lysol to develop new, innovative disinfecting solutions, with an initial focus on cleaning procedures for aircraft toilets. It will also develop disinfection protocols for high-traffic areas, including departure gates and lounges.

Southwest Airlines

The airline offers the Southwest Promise, prioritizing passenger wellbeing from check-in to deplaning.⁷

Cleaning

- Electrostatic disinfectant and anti-microbial spray applied to every surface on aircraft.
- Onboard lavatories, tray tables, armrests, seat belts, flight attendant call buttons and overhead bin handles cleaned with Sani-Cide EX3 broad-spectrum disinfectant before every flight.
- All aircraft deep-cleaned for 6-7 hours every night.
- All aircraft equipped with HEPA air filters, with cabin air completely exchanged every two to three minutes.
- Hand sanitizer available at check-in kiosks, ticket counters and gates.
- Ticket counters, gates and baggage claim areas cleaned multiple times a day.

Social distancing

- Signage and floor markers to encourage physical distancing at departure gates.
- Transparent screens installed at ticketing and gate counters, and at baggage service offices.
- Passengers board in groups of 10.
- Middle seats open until September 30. Passengers traveling together are still welcome to sit together.

Passengers

- All passengers should check their temperature prior to travel.
- Passengers with a fever or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay at home.
- Mobile boarding passes should be downloaded prior to arrival, preferably using the airlines app.
- All travelers are required to wear a face mask at the airport and onboard the aircraft.
- Southwest recommends arriving at the airport early to allow for new check-in and security processes.
- Passengers are reminded to maintain physical distancing at all times.

⁵ [Delta Air Lines](#), June 30 2020

⁶ [Business Travel News](#), July 27, 2020

⁷ [Southwest](#), Southwest Promise

Employees

- Customer-facing employees wear masks or other face coverings.
- Ticket counters, gates and baggage claim areas are frequently cleaned.

United Airlines

The airline has launched United CleanPlus as its commitment to industry-leading cleanliness, putting health and safety at the forefront of the travel experience.⁸ It has three core components.

Delivering industry-leading cleanliness

- Aircraft flight decks cleaned with ultraviolet C lighting technology
- Disinfecting high-touch areas like arm rests, door handles, toilets, seatback screens and seat belts
- Equipping employees with hand sanitizer
- Passengers given hand sanitizer wipes during boarding
- Ensuring aircraft cleaning standards meet or exceed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines
- Electrostatic spraying of all aircraft before departure
- All aircraft equipped with HEPA filters to circulate air and remove at least 99.97% of airborne particles
- Touchpoints reduced by temporary closure of self-service kiosks and passengers encouraged to check in and download boarding passes online
- Sneeze guards installed at key interaction points like baggage and check-in counters

Prioritizing your wellbeing

- Travelers must wear a face covering during the flight. Anyone refusing to wear one may be turned away from the flight and lose privileges toward future United flights
- During check-in, passengers must confirm the absence of COVID-19 symptoms. Before being allowed to fly, passengers must confirm they have not been diagnosed with COVID-19 during the last three weeks, are not experiencing symptoms and have not been in contact in the last two weeks with someone testing positive for COVID-19.⁹
- “All-in-one” snack bag including a sanitizer wipe, bottled water, snacks
- After pre-boarding, passengers board in smaller groups from back to front by rows
- On flights expected to be full, passengers can change their flight with no fee or receive a travel credit
- 6-foot social distancing rule introduced at ticket counters
- Pillows and blankets provided on request only on international flights

Innovating for a healthier tomorrow, developing ways to create the safest travel journey

- Clorox Total 360 electrostatic sprayers to disinfect gate areas at the airport
- Touchless check-in processes at select airports. Touchless baggage check-in is available at all 219 U.S. airports where the airline owns check-in kiosks.¹⁰ The technology allows passengers to print bag tags by scanning a mobile or printed boarding pass without needing to touch a screen.
- Tools being developed to reduce touchpoints throughout the travel experience
- Temperature checks for employees at hub airports
- Testing UV sanitization deployed by drones and hand-held wands, and anti-microbial shields for airport and aircraft surfaces

⁸ [United CleanPlus](#)

⁹ [Business Travel News](#), June 10, 2020

¹⁰ [Business Travel News](#), June 11, 2020

- Exploring the use of artificial intelligence to assist with temperature screenings and crowd detection

On July 27, United Airlines began maximizing airflow volumes through its filtration systems during boarding and deplaning on all mainline aircraft.¹¹ The carrier decided on the new policy following a review of procedures with partners Clorox and the Cleveland Clinic.

To further improve the cleanliness on board its aircraft, United plans to apply an antimicrobial coating across its full fleet by the end of 2020.¹² Zoono Microbe Shield bonds to surfaces and creates a protective layer that destroys microbes. As at September 2020, United was using the product on more than 30 aircraft operating out of Chicago O'Hare.

From October 15, 2020, United Airlines will start in-airport and mail-in testing at San Francisco for Hawaii-bound passengers.

Other U.S. carriers

Alaska Airlines

Alaska Airlines has introduced the Next-Level Care program, implementing nearly 100 ways which includes enhanced cleaning on board aircraft and in airports, smaller boarding groups and reduced onboard food and beverage service.¹³

Until July 31, 2020, Alaska Air Lines blocked middle seats on all flights and is capping capacity at 65%, although groups wishing to sit together can request this by calling reservations.¹⁴

From June 30, the airline also introduced a pre-flight health agreement, requiring passengers to verify that they do not have COVID-19 symptoms, have not been in contact with symptoms and will wear a face covering in the airport and onboard the aircraft.

Passengers who do not comply with the airline's requirement to wear face masks may be banned from future flights.¹⁵ Flight attendants have been authorized to issue "final notice" yellow cards to passengers who repeatedly refuse to wear a facial covering. At this point, the passenger's travel will be reviewed and may be suspended for a period. From August 7, 2020, Alaska further tightened its mask and face covering rules.¹⁶ All passengers aged 2 and older must wear a mask or face covering over their nose and mouth. There are no other exceptions. Any passenger unable or unwilling to wear a mask will not be allowed to travel. Face coverings must be made from a cloth or other barrier material that prevents the discharge, release and expulsion of respiratory droplets. Passengers wearing a face shield must wear a mask too. Masks with direct exhaust valves, mesh material or holes of any kind are not acceptable.

On August 1, Alaska Airlines reopened its lounges in Anchorage, Los Angeles, Portland and Seattle Concourse N. Its JFK lounge remains closed until further notice.

¹¹ [Business Travel News](#), July 21, 2020

¹² [Business Travel News](#), September 16, 2020

¹³ [Alaska Airlines](#), Next-Level Care

¹⁴ [Business Travel News](#), June 9, 2020

¹⁵ [Business Travel News](#), July 1, 2020

¹⁶ [Alaska Airlines](#), August 7, 2020

Late in August 2020, Alaska Airlines announced the introduction of technology and protocols to reduce touchpoints for travelers.¹⁷ These include the ability to print baggage tags without touching check-in kiosks, boarding passes via text message for passengers without the airline’s app and the capability of agents to scan boarding passes at a distance of six feet during boarding. Alaska Airlines will also enable passengers to pre-order onboard food and beverage service once it returns.

From October 12, 2020, Alaska Airlines will offer COVID-19 tests for passengers through Carbon Health, which will open a temporary clinic in Seattle.¹⁸ Costing \$135, passengers should receive their results within two hours. While the service is offered to all passengers, the airline is targeting those traveling to Hawaii, as a negative result will allow them to avoid quarantine. The state of Alaska also has a 14-day quarantine, which can be avoided with a negative result.

Carbon Health will open clinics in other cities, including Portland, San Jose, San Diego and Los Angeles. Alaska Airlines would also like to open a clinic at Seattle Tacoma International Airport.

Allegiant Air

The low-cost carrier claims to be “going the distance for health and safety.”¹⁹

Cleaning

- Aircraft are cleaned and disinfected to the highest possible standards, exceeding guidance from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and Airbus
- Each aircraft is subject to a regular schedule of standard and deep-clean procedures
- All touch surfaces – seatbelts, tray tables, galleys, toilets – are sanitized and disinfected thoroughly during every cleaning
- Aircraft are cleaned with an advanced microbial protectant that kills viruses, germs and bacteria on contact for 14 days
- Disinfectant wipes are available on board all aircraft for customers to use
- All passengers (except children under 2 years) must wear a face covering over their nose and mouth at all times when travelling. Anyone with a medical condition preventing them wearing a mask must provide documentation from a doctor to departure gate staff one hour before departure
- Each passenger receive a complimentary health and safety kit containing a single-use face mask and two sanitizing wipes
- Air quality exceeds HEPA standards thanks to VOC (volatile organic compound) filters, which remove additional organic compounds.
- Cabin air is changed every three minutes
- All crew members wear a face covering at all times and gloves during inflight service
- All staff have their temperatures checked
- All inflight services are pre-packaged and factory-sealed when served
- Inflight magazines and insert have been removed from all seatbacks

Check-in

- Signs and regular announcements remind passengers of the need to social distance

¹⁷ [Business Travel News](#), August 25, 2020

¹⁸ [Business Travel News](#), September 30, 2020

¹⁹ [Allegiant Air](#), Going the distance for health and safety

- Passengers must complete a health acknowledgement certifying that they will wear a face mask at all times, have not been in contact with anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms, will not travel if unwell, and will wash/sanitize their hands before boarding the flight

Boarding

- Customers are encouraged to scan their own boarding passes to prevent unnecessary handling

On board

- Crew members may reseat boarded passengers to provide additional distancing when possible
- Customers are encouraged not to book the middle seat, unless to ensure family members can sit together
- Customers concerned about being on a flight that cannot accommodate social distancing can ask to be notified if a booked flight exceeds 65% capacity

Allegiant has introduced new service [practices and boarding procedures to provide additional distancing between customers wherever possible.

Frontier Airlines

Under the banner “Committed to you,” Frontier has made a number of changes to support traveler wellbeing and comfort.²⁰

Enhanced cleaning

- Extra attention is given to cleaning ticket counters, gate areas and aircraft with EPA-approved anti-virus solutions
- Before every flight, aircraft interiors are cleaned, with a focus on passenger seating, cabin walls, overhead bins, galleys and toilets
- Where there is extra time between flights, aircraft are disinfected, with all customer and crew touchpoints wiped down – toilets, seats, armrests, tray tables, walls, overhead panels and bins, window shades and galleys
- While parked overnight, the Aircraft Appearance Team spends 4-6 hours thoroughly cleaning the aircraft’s interior using industry-recommended disinfectant
- Each month, every aircraft is deep cleaned using an anti-microbial agent that forms a protective shield, effective against viruses for 30 days

Face coverings

- Passengers and staff must wear a face covering over nose and mouth from ticket counter, onboard all flights, through to baggage reclaim
- Only children under 2 years are exempt from wearing a face covering
- Open-chin triangle bandanas, face coverings with vents, valves or mesh material, and face shields on their own are not acceptable
- Passengers not wearing a face covering may lose future travel privileges

Health & hygiene

- Cabin air passes through an air filtration system that mixes with fresh air drawn from outside the aircraft
- Cabin air is refreshed every 3 minutes
- Aircraft are equipped with HEPA filters capable of capturing virus particles at more than 99.9% efficiency

²⁰ [Frontier Airlines](#), Committed to You

- Passengers and crew have their temperature taken at the boarding gate using a non-invasive touchless thermometer. Anyone with a temperature above 100.4° Fahrenheit will not be allowed onboard
- Passengers failing temperature screening will be retested, if time allows
- When checking in for a flight, passengers must accept a health acknowledgement that they will submit to temperature screening, will wear a face mask, have not come into close contact in the last 14 days with someone with COVID-19 symptoms, and will sanitize hands before boarding the flight

Social distancing

- Frontier has made space at check-in counters and departure gates
- Signs and floor markers have been placed throughout gate and ticket areas to encourage social distancing
- At the departure gate, passengers now board aircraft from back to front to reduce “passing” contact with other passengers
- Plexiglass partitions have been installed at ticket counters

Travel tips

- Wear a face covering as soon as you enter the airport
- Bring your own gloves, hand sanitizer and cleaning wipes
- Limit your touchpoints – download your boarding pass to your mobile phone before arrival, bring your own food and drink
- Maintain social distancing wherever possible

Hawaiian Airlines

The primary concern of Hawaiian Airlines is always the health and safety of its guests and employees.²¹ Following recommendations from leading public health authorities, the airline has reinforced and enhanced cleaning procedures to keep aircraft and airport spaces safe and clean.

At the airport

- Employees wear face masks when interacting with passengers
- From boarding through deplaning at the destination, passengers are required to wear a face mask or covering of the mouth and nose
- Common areas, such as counters and kiosks, are disinfected multiple times per day
- Hand sanitizer is readily available at the airport
- The Plumeria Lounge and all Premier Club airport lounges are temporarily closed
- 6-foot social distancing floor markers placed at ticket counters, gates and baggage claim areas

Boarding and deplaning

- Boarding and deplaning process modified to promote safe distancing
- Guests remain seated at the boarding gate until row is called to board
- Main Cabin passengers board from the rear of the aircraft in groups of three to five rows at a time
- Passengers deplane by rows, starting from the front of the aircraft

Clean aircraft

- Detailed protocols for cleaning and disinfecting aircraft
- Transpacific aircraft thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after every flight
- Aircraft on interisland services are cleaned after every flight to Honolulu and disinfected daily

²¹ [Hawaiian Airlines](#), Keeping you safe

- Special attention is given to high-touch areas: seats, seatbacks, headrest, IFE monitors, tray tables, overhead bins, walls, windows and shades, galleys, toilets
- Electrostatic spraying more comprehensively and evenly cleans aircraft cabins
- Transpacific aircraft are fitted with HEPA air filters. On interisland flights, air is not recirculated, but is replaced continuously with fresh air from outside

On board aircraft

- Cabin crew and passengers must wear face masks
- Middle seats left free to provide extra space. Seating may be adjusted to maximize spacing and meet weight and balance restrictions

Changes to inflight service

- All flight attendants wear masks and gloves
- Guests receive a complimentary sanitizing wipe
- Poured beverages are no longer available; only canned or bottled beverages are offered
- Sale of alcoholic beverages has been suspended
- Shared newspapers have been removed
- Hot towel service suspended

From October 15, 2020, Hawaiian started offering drive-through COVID-19 tests in select U.S. mainland destinations to give travelers a chance to avoid the 14-day quarantine when arriving in Hawaii.²² Working with Worksite Labs, Hawaiian started by offering nasal swab tests (polymerase chain reaction – PCR) in Los Angeles and San Francisco, charging passengers \$90 for results within 36 hours, or \$150 for a day-of-travel express service. By testing negative within 72 hours of departure, travelers are exempt from Hawaii's 14-day quarantine upon arrival.

At the same time, Hawaiian will also offer at-home testing delivered through a partnership with Vault Health. Passengers are mailed a \$150 test, self-conducted with the help of a video chat, which is sent overnight to Vault, with results within 24 hours.²³

JetBlue Airways

The safety and wellbeing of customers and crewmembers remains JetBlue's number 1 priority.²⁴

Healthy crewmembers

- Temperature of all customer-facing employees checked
- Paid sick leave and additional time off provided to discourage unwell employees from turning up for work
- Strict protocols following any employee exposure to COVID-19
- Kits containing sanitizer spray and disinfectant wipes issued to all staff
- Crewmembers must wear face coverings while at work, with medical-grade gloves worn during flights

Clean air and surfaces

- More frequent disinfection of common surfaces including kiosks and airport counters
- Hand sanitizer available throughout airport terminals, with disinfectant wipes given to customers on board on request

²² Cirium, September 25, 2020

²³ [Business Travel News](#), October 1, 2020

²⁴ [JetBlue](#), Safety from the Ground up

- Aircraft deep-cleaned each night with hospital-grade Sani-Cide EX3 disinfectant dispensed by electrostatic sprayers. Tray tables and toilets disinfected before every flight, with high-touch areas, including seat covers, armrests and seatbelts, disinfected in overnight cleaning
- All aircraft are equipped with hospital grade HEPA air filters. Cabin air is changed every three minutes with 50% fresh and 50% HEPA-filtered air

More space, fewer touchpoints

- All customers must wear face coverings during check-in, boarding and in flight
- Until September 8, middle seats are blocked on larger aircraft and most aisle seats on smaller aircraft
- Cabin crew proactively review seat assignments to ensure as much personal space as possible
- Buffer zones around cabin crew jump seats allow for additional safety
- Passengers can also buy extra seats to ensure physical distancing during the flight
- As part of the check-in process, all passengers must complete a health declaration acknowledging they have not tested positive, experienced symptoms or been in recent contact with someone who has tested positive
- To reduce airport touchpoints, passengers are encouraged to download the airline's app to check-in, add bags to a reservation, select a seat and self-scan boarding passes.
- Passengers board JetBlue aircraft from back to front
- Onboard service streamlined, with sales of onboard purchases suspended, Grab & Go snacks unavailable and Mint experience adjusted

From the end of September 2020, JetBlue started to give passengers access to testing prior to travel.²⁵ At-home COVID-19 testing supplier Vault Health has created a webpage for JetBlue's customers, which provides a JetBlue confirmation code and begins the testing process at a discounted price. Vault provides an at-home saliva test, which users perform under video supervision to ensure it's done properly. The user sends it overnight to a lab, with results within 72 hours. Testing should help passengers avoid quarantine requirements as travel resumes.

Spirit Airlines

To protect the health and safety of passengers and staff, Spirit Airlines has created a COVID-19 Information Center.²⁶ It has implemented a number of hygiene and safety measures.

At the airport

- Before travel, passengers should download the Spirit Mobile App to book a flight, check-in and retrieve boarding passes
- Passengers are encouraged to use self-bag-tag and self-bag-drop where available
- Frequent cleaning of airport kiosks using EPA-registered disinfectants
- Plexiglass dividers installed at ticket counters and at departure gates
- Social distancing indicators at all check-in counters
- Hand sanitizer stations installed at the departure gate
- Departure gates and check-in counters are sanitized using electrostatic spraying
- Cleaning wipes are available at jetways
- Guests scan own boarding passes

²⁵ [Business Travel News](#), September 28, 2020

²⁶ [Spirit Airlines](#), COVID-19 Information Center

On the aircraft

- Passengers (except those under 2 years old) must wear appropriate face coverings during their entire journey. Anyone unable to wear a mask for any reason, including medical, will not be permitted to travel. Disposable non-medical face masks and multi-layered cloth face coverings are acceptable. Open-chin triangle bandanas and face coverings featuring valves or mesh material are not allowed. Face shields may only be worn if done so in conjunction with a face mask. Passengers choosing not to comply with these rules will lose future flight privileges
- Through cleaning of high-touch areas
- All aircraft are equipped with HEPA filters capturing 99.97% of particles, filtering cabin air for contaminants every 2-3 minutes
- Two EPA-registered fogging treatments disinfect aircraft: the first applies a high-grade disinfectant effective against coronaviruses; the second uses an antimicrobial product creating an invisible barrier on all surfaces, killing bacteria and viruses on contact for 30 days
- Cabin crew are trained to report and address infectious diseases and work closely with MedAire for ground and inflight expert medical assistance

Canadian carriers

Air Canada

The airline has introduced Air Canada CleanCare+, which it describes as an industry-leading program committed to end-to-end health and safety protocols.²⁷

Check-in

- Health screening questions
- Pre-flight infrared temperature checks for customers
- Disinfection of frequently touched areas like check-in counters and kiosks
- TouchFree Bag Check kiosks installed at select airports for domestic travel, rolling out for international travel beginning mid-July. Passengers must check in online first to get their boarding pass in advance
- Virtual queues – passengers scan a QR code at the entrance to a queue, receive a virtual ticket on their phone and a notification when it's time to proceed to the counter

Lounges

- Lounge is divided into separate sections to facilitate enhanced cleaning, including electrostatic spraying.
- Hand sanitizer stations are located throughout the lounge
- Face masks are mandatory for customers and staff
- All high-touch areas are thoroughly cleaned with hospital grade disinfectant throughout the day
- Passengers self-scan boarding pass, status or membership card for lounge entry
- Temperature screenings and daily health assessments are mandatory for all staff
- 30-day record is kept of all lounge visitors for contact tracing purposes
- Floor decals manage customer flow
- Tables and chairs are sanitized after each use
- Pre-packaged meals can be ordered and delivered to the table by scanning a QR code
- Showers are closed until further notice

²⁷ Air Canada CleanCare+

Boarding

- Boarding fewer passengers at the same time, starting from window to aisle, and from back to front
- Passengers scan own boarding pass
- Boarding gates close 30 minutes prior to departure
- Priority and pre-boarding still available
- Ongoing cleaning of surfaces
- Regular health screening questions for all customers
- Mandatory face coverings for all employees and customers

On board

- All high-touch areas sanitized with hospital-grade disinfectant before every flight
- Extra cleaning measures conducted on aircraft overnight
- Mandatory face coverings
- Adjusted onboard services – vary by cabin and destination
- In Economy Class, if a flight is nearing capacity, an email may be sent before the flight, or an announcement will be made at the gate before boarding. Passengers can explore other options if preferring more space onboard. Passengers can select another flight at no charge.

Air Canada is working with biotech company Spartan Bioscience Inc to establish how best to deploy portable COVID-19 testing.²⁸ Spartan is developing a proprietary swab for collecting DNA samples for its COVID-19 test. Once approved by Health Canada, this could be incorporated into CleanCare+. The airline has yet to decide at what point in the travel process it would deploy testing.

Air Transat

Air Transat has created Traveller Care, a program featuring enhanced health and safety measures.²⁹

Before the flight

- Make sure you're healthy enough to travel
- Keep informed about a rapidly-changing situation. Check the websites of destination country and airports for extra measures
- Bring a face mask, which will be required on the airplane, and possibly in the airport too
- Check-in online
- Pay online for any extras like extra bags and extra inflight services
- Download the Air Transat app to stay informed
- Download the ArriveCAN app to reduce wait times when arriving in Canada and reduce points of contact

At check-in

- All check-in counters and self-service kiosks are regularly and thoroughly cleaned
- Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed
- All employees wear face coverings or will be behind Plexiglas partitions
- Passengers should use self-service check-in and self-service baggage drop-off
- All passengers will be asked health-related questions
- As part of pre-departure screening, passengers will have their temperatures taken

²⁸ [Business Travel News](#), July 8, 2020

²⁹ [Air Transat](#), Traveller Care

During boarding

- Counters at departure gates are regularly and thoroughly cleaned
- All employees wear face coverings or will be behind Plexiglas partitions
- Passengers must keep two meters from other passengers during boarding
- Priority boarding is only available to passengers with reduced mobility
- Aircraft are boarded from back to front

On board

- Before each flight, aircraft are thoroughly cleaned with hospital grade disinfectant, including seats, headrest covers, seat belt buckles, seat controls, seatback pockets, armrests, light switches, air circulation controls, tray tables, individual entertainment screens, overhead bins and handles.
- Each aircraft is cleaned every 24 hours with electrostatic disinfectant
- Pilots and flight attendants wear face coverings throughout the flight
- Passengers must wear a face covering
- Each passenger receives a complimentary Traveller Care kit, which includes a face covering, gloves, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes
- Toilets are sanitized regularly throughout the flight with disinfectant. Only one passenger may queue.

On arrival

- Passengers disembark from the front of the aircraft first
- Passengers must keep two meters apart during deplaning

WestJet

Reflecting the top priority WestJet places on the safety of travelers, WestJet launched its Safety above all initiative on June 9, 2020.³⁰

Check-in

- Passengers should check-in online or via the WestJet app to limit contact with surfaces and staff
- Staff wipe down surfaces at check-in counters and check-in kiosks after each passenger
- Social distancing gives passengers more room when queuing
- Passengers must handle their own bags
- Staff wear masks

Boarding

- Enhanced screening during boarding includes health questions required by Transport Canada
- Passengers will have their temperatures taken without contact
- All passengers over 2 years old must wear masks to be allowed to board aircraft. Passengers should bring a face mask or scarf to wear throughout the journey

On board

- Each passenger receives a disinfectant wipe to freshen up the seat area for extra peace of mind
- A snack and bottled water is left at each seat
- Only on flights over 60 minutes is a small menu of snacks for purchase offered
- HEPA filters introduced fresh air every 2-3 minutes

³⁰ [WestJet](#), Safety above all

- Hospital-grade Clorox wipes and spray are used to disinfect galleys, toilets and door handles, tray tables, seat armrests and headrests, seatbelt buckles and overhead bins latches
- The entire aircraft interior is completely disinfected using the fogging of a hydrogen peroxide-based solution cleaner

Mexican carriers

Aeromexico

Aeromexico has introduced a Health and Sanitization Management System to protect passengers during every step of their journey.³¹

Face masks are mandatory throughout the journey. Passengers may use disposable medical face masks. They can also use reusable masks. These must be made from a multi-layered absorbent material, cover the mouth and nose without any gaps, be secure when worn, and keep their shape after washing.

Airline staff are all subjected to regular medical examinations and must use protective equipment (face masks and gloves).

At the airport

- Only alternate check-in counters are used, to maintain space
- Passengers are asked to keep their distance at all times
- Hand sanitizer is available at check-in counters and in waiting areas
- All passengers have their temperatures checked and have health interviews
- Boarding passes are scanned contactlessly

On board

- Aircraft cabins are completely disinfected using a rigorous sanitization process
- Face masks are mandatory throughout the flight
- Aircraft are boarded from back to front
- Passengers are offered hand sanitizer when boarding
- All food and beverages are individually packaged and sealed
- All aircraft are fitted with HEPA filters, eliminating 99.99% of microparticles like viruses and bacteria

Interjet

The safety of passengers and employees is Interjet's number one priority.³² The Mexican airline is in contact with airports and health authorities, so that it is prepared to deal with any issues resulting from COVID-19.

Before the flight

- Check-in online or on the Interjet app and download boarding passes
- Prepare a kit with facemasks, antibacterial gel and sanitizing wipes
- Remember to wear a face mask at the airport, during the flight and while disembarking
- Facemasks can't be purchased at some airports
- Arrive at the airport earlier than usual because of the extra security measures

³¹ [Aeromexico](#), Your safety is our top priority

³² [Interjet](#), Travel safely with Interjet

At the airport

- All passengers are checked for COVID-19 symptoms
- Plastic shields reduce contact between staff and passengers at counters
- Counters and computer equipment are regularly disinfected
- Maintain a safe distance of at least 1 meter when in a queue
- Antibacterial gel is available in the airport

Boarding

- Antibacterial gel is available at departure gates and lounges
- Passengers should keep at least 1 meter apart from others
- To reduce contact, have ID/passport and boarding pass ready to show

Aircraft cleaning

- Aircraft are cleaned and disinfected before and after every flight
- Only disposable materials and products recommended by health authorities are used for cleaning
- Air purification systems completely change cabin air every 3 minutes
- All aircraft are fitted with HEPA filters that remove 99.99% of viruses, bacteria and fungi

On the plane

- Crew wear masks throughout the flight
- Crew are prepared to deal with any passengers presenting any COVID-19 symptoms
- All products on the free Snack & Fly menu on board is prepared in compliance with strict safety standards issued by health agencies

At the destination

- When collecting luggage, maintain a distance from other passengers
- If traveling in a group, only one person should collect the luggage from the carousel

Viva Aerobus

Mexican low-cost carrier Viva Aerobus has taken a number of actions to enable passengers to travel safely.³³ It has implemented a number of COVID-19 preventive measures and offers recommendations.

Before the trip

- Remember to bring a face mask to wear throughout the trip
- Bring your own hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes
- All passengers are required to complete a Questionnaire of Identification of Risk Factors in Traveler and present it (digital or paper version) of the day of travel
- Check-in online up to ten days before travel and up to 70 minutes before departure

At the airport

- Try to avoid checking in bags if possible. Carry-on baggage allowance has been increased to 33 pounds
- Checked bags are sanitized by the airline
- Maintain a safe distance when checking in, during boarding, and at baggage reclaim
- Staff manage queues to ensure social distancing is maintained
- Passengers board aircraft row by row; they should remain seated at the departure gate until called

³³ [Viva Aerobus](#), Viva for You

- Passengers must scan their own boarding passes
- Passengers disembark by rows
- All customer-facing employees wear gloves and face masks or shields

On board the aircraft

- After the flight, passengers are asked to take their rubbish with them
- A food and beverage service continues to be offered onboard, but payment must be made by credit or debit card to limit physical contact

Hygiene and cleaning

- In addition to normal cleaning procedures, all aircraft are disinfected with chemicals approved by national and international authorities
- All aircraft are equipped with medical-grade HEPA filters purifying the air every 3 minutes

Volaris

The Mexican low-cost carrier has adapted its service to make passengers feel safer while traveling. It has implemented a number of new biosecurity and preventive measures.³⁴

Check-in

- Face masks must be worn during the entire journey
- Only people with a boarding pass may be allowed to enter airport terminals
- Passengers should check-in using the airline's app and download their boarding passes
- All surfaces are being constantly cleaned with industrial-grade disinfectants
- Signs and markings help travelers maintain a safe distance in all queues
- Check-in staff wear masks, gloves and face shields and sit behind protection glass

Boarding

- Passengers scan their own boarding passes, avoiding contact with airline staff
- Disinfectant mats have been placed at aircraft entrances
- Staff check passenger temperatures using an infrared forehead thermometer
- Boarding is in groups of no more than 30 people at a time

On board aircraft

- Cabin crew wear masks, gloves and face shields
- Passengers are provided with hand sanitizer gel
- All aircraft are fitted with HEPA filters, recycling 100% of cabin air every 3 minutes and removing 99.9% of viruses and bacteria
- Aircraft interiors are deep cleaned before each flight
- All surfaces are disinfected using industrial-grade cleaning products – tables, backrests, armrests, seats, safety belts, partitions and luggage compartments

On arrival

- Passengers disembark row by row
- Baggage is disinfected to keep it free from viruses and bacteria

³⁴ [Volaris](#), With Volaris Fly Sure

- Safe distances are maintained in baggage reclaim areas

Note – HEPA filters

When outlining their safety and hygiene measures, many airlines refer to the use of HEPA filters onboard their aircraft. According to the European air filter efficiency classification, high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters can be any filter element rated between 85% and 99.995% removal efficiency.³⁵ Aircraft manufacturers have chosen to install the higher efficiency filters, which are similar to those used in hospital operating theaters. Most modern, large commercial aircraft, which recirculate cabin air, use HEPA filters. Some older aircraft may use less-efficient filters.

Air filters can remove very small particles, such as bacteria and viruses. With an efficiency level of 99.995%, HEPA filters can remove virtually all viruses and bacteria.

Note

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the situation is changing on almost an hourly basis. The information presented in this report represents the latest view as at October 2, 2020. We have carefully researched and checked the information contained. However, we do not guarantee or warrant the correctness, completeness or topicality of this article and do not accept any liability for any damage or loss as a result of the use of the information contained within this article.

Do you have questions or comments regarding this report? Please email mike.eggleson@bcdtravel.co.uk to share your thoughts.

³⁵ [IATA](#), Briefing Paper, Cabin air quality – Risk of communicable disease transmission