

Covid-19: Returning to Travel



Introduction

Coronavirus has wreaked havoc on the world's tourism industry, and it's understandable that some organisations—and their staff—are reluctant to return to business travel as it was. Covid-19 remains a reality, and while great steps have been made to normalise remote working, for some businesses corporate travel remains an important element of working life.

Getting travel right is key for any organisation; it can save you money and time. But getting in right in a world with Covid-19 is even more important. No one wants valuable staff off sick under any circumstances, but safeguarding your people during a pandemic is paramount.

The UK government has provided a range of useful resources online to help travelling staff. You can find a link to the website and other best practice resources on the next page. Our guide outlines what to expect when you travel in the current climate, and features tips and advice to help you and your teams travel responsibly.



UK Government advice:

- Plan ahead and use a direct route;
- Avoid busy times and routes;
- Wear a face covering on public transport;
- Wash or sanitise your hands before beginning your journey;
- Maintain a two-metre distance where possible;
- Use contactless payment where possible;
- Follow guidance at your destination;
- Wash or sanitise your hands as soon as possible.

1. Advice from the FCO changes daily, so make sure to check regularly for the most recent travel advice.

2. At the time of publication, there hasn't been any specific research which indicates that hotels or public transportation represent a higher risk for the transmission of coronavirus. While it's definitely worth taking additional precautions, it's also important to recognise that any risks are low and that travel can still be a safe activity, if government guidelines are followed.

Getting your teams ready



Build a Covid Kit

For your frequent travellers, put together a list of items they should travel with (whether sourced by you or by themselves). These are basic items to keep staff safe and hygienic while they travel. It's worth checking destinations for rules on PPE; some places require face-coverings to be worn anywhere in public.



Opt for contactless and e-tickets

Where possible, use ticketing apps for contactless check-in, or opt for a travel booking platform that allows users to access tickets through one central portal, such as Ortharize. Most organisations offer online check-in ahead of travel which also helps to reduce contact.



Keep up to date with news and lockdown restrictions, both domestic and international, before travel

The situation across the world is incredibly fluid, with lockdowns being announced at short notice and travel restrictions imposed. Ask staff to check daily one week before trips, and every day while they are travelling, so that they are aware of any changes in rules.

Resources:

FCO Travel Advice

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

UK Government Coronavirus Info

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Disinfection Guidance

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html#clean-disinfect>

IATA Travel Regulations Map

<https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.html>

Your Covid Kit contents:

- 60% plus Alcohol hand gel;
- A reusable face mask or disposable face masks;
- Washing detergent to clean reusable mask after each day;
- Ample disposable gloves for each day of travelling;
- Alcohol wipes (for surfaces, door handles, laptops, etc);
- Isopropyl wipes for smartphones;
- A plastic bag for used gloves and face coverings;
- Tissues;
- Thermometer;
- Fever reducing medicines such as paracetamol.

Flights

Airports

Check your temperature before you leave home. You may have your temperature checked at the airport, and if it's classed as high, you could be asked to return home and not travel. It is advised that you don't touch any surfaces within the airport to reduce transmission risk, and if using self-service terminals, you should wash your hands afterwards.

The UK Government advises that travellers shouldn't walk around the airport and mix with strangers before boarding. If you're browsing in the shop, only touch items you're going to buy and pay with contactless where possible. Have your passport open to show staff and avoid contact (plexiglass screens are in use at many airports).

Staff throughout most airports will be wearing masks and gloves and there will be plastic screens in place at document checking stations. As fewer people are travelling, there may be queues and delays through security, with fewer staff and screening lanes open. Arrive early where possible.

Flights

Many governments and airlines require masks to be worn at all times in flight.

Many airlines are professionally cleaning their aircraft each day and have implemented high quality air filtration systems that operate to hospital standards. To find out more on what each aircraft is doing to reduce transmission, visit their website.

Many airlines are offering a simplified catering service and are accepting contactless only. Queuing for the toilet is usually prohibited and passengers are asked to remain in their seats at all times.

Destination

Leave the terminal as quickly as possible. Many airports have a strict distancing setup around baggage collection, where you'll need to queue at bays to collect luggage. Before travelling, make sure that you've checked your end destination for any restrictions, necessary tests on arrival or isolation periods, as these vary from country to country and can change rapidly.

Tips

- Plan as few stops as possible;
- Place everything you would usually carry in pockets into your carry-on luggage; security check trays aren't always sanitised;
- Use online check-in where possible;
- Prepare food and water for your trip just in case of closures (although liquid restrictions are still in place at many airports).





Tips

- Avoid table seats.
 - Government advice recommends travelling “side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them”, which will help minimise the risk of transmission.
- If parking at the station, use pay by phone, in-app or online payment.
- Travel at quieter times (after 9.30am in cities and 9am everywhere else).
- Purchase tickets online, or via contactless if needed at the station, and use ticket apps to reduce contact.
- If available, reserve your seat in advance.
- Do not travel if either you and or anyone in your household are showing symptoms of Covid-19.

Rail

As with the majority of transport services, many stations and trains are operating with higher levels of cleaning, both in frequency and detail. Extra train carriages are being offered on many routes to help with social distancing. Train timetables are constantly changing, so make sure to check ahead of travel.

As with flights, many countries require face coverings be worn on public transport, although exemptions may apply to certain groups of people (this varies from country to country). Check on the National Rail website, or through the local train operator’s website for information on local lockdowns or

‘red zones’; travel may be restricted to and through these areas. Onboard catering is likely to be reduced on many services, so make sure you are prepared for long journeys.

In England and Wales, National Rail are installing hand sanitiser points in over 300 stations, as well as vending machines with hand sanitiser and face coverings in 150 more. As with all modes of transport, make sure your travellers are carrying hand sanitiser, avoiding high-use touchpoints and always wash their hands—for 20 seconds with hot water and soap—at the end of their journey.

Train Information:

National Rail (England & Wales)

<https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Scots Rail

<https://www.scotrail.co.uk/>

SNCF Rail (France)

<https://www.sncf.com/en>

Deutsche Bahn (Germany)

<https://www.bahn.com/en>

Hotels

Many hotels have gone above and beyond to make their premises safe and hygienic ahead of reopening to the public.

Before booking, it's worth checking to see which measures your preferred hotel has implemented; increased cleaning services, plexiglass barriers at reception and social distancing signs through the hotel are common. Staff won't be offended to be asked about cleaning policies, and should be able to let you know what gets cleaned when house-keeping visits your room.

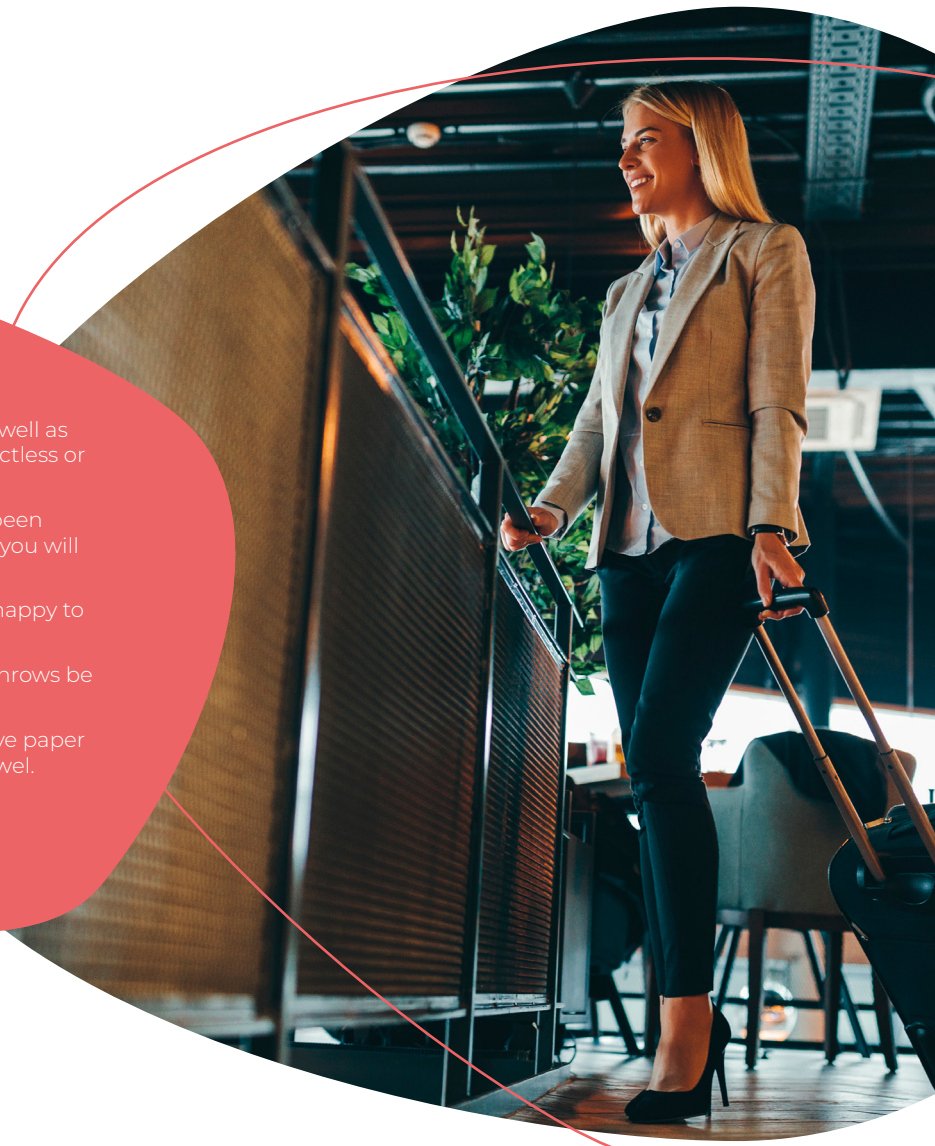
If you are considering cleaning the room yourself, note that you should take care when using disinfectant and chemicals— always read the label before use! Target high-touch surfaces such as door-knobs, tables, desks, phones, light switches, toilets, sinks, remote controls and taps.

Different surfaces require different types of cleaning and more information can be found on the CDC website (link on page two).

Many hotels are offering room service meals or have tables set up to eat within the comfort of your room to avoid mixing in a public restaurant. If this isn't on offer, the safest options are a food delivery or a drive-through restaurant. If you do visit a restaurant, make sure that they are operating social distancing and wearing adequate PPE.

Tips

- Use online reservation and check-in, as well as mobile room keys if available and contactless or pre-authorized payment;
- Many hotels will offer rooms that have been vacant for 24 hours prior to your arrival (you will need to call the hotel to arrange this);
- If in doubt, call the hotel and they'll be happy to help with any concerns or questions;
- Request that decorative cushions and throws be removed before arrival;
- Check whether there is an option to have paper towels in the room instead of a hand towel.





Tips

- Complete your check-in and documentation online where possible;
- Make sure you travel with ample hand sanitizer, although some rental companies are providing these in cars;
- Check 48 and 24 hours ahead of travel for changes in restrictions or opening hours;
- Make as few stops at services and other premises as possible, but stop driving if you feel tired or drowsy.

Cleaning the car yourself:

1. Clean all touch points on the car exterior such as handles, mirrors and the fuel tank cap with disinfectant wipes.
2. Aerate the car as long as possible to provide a fresh air supply to the car.
3. Disinfect the drivers panel, dashboard and all knobs and buttons.
4. Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face.

Car Rental

Many car rental companies have been touting their 'flexibility' during this pandemic. Some rental firms are happy to make changes to any reservation—in a similar way to airlines—under the current circumstances. The best thing to do is to check the car rental website for information on these policies, as they are changing over time. You'll also be able to find out more on any enhanced cleaning the rental firms have put in place.

Pick up stations for major rental firms have been kitted out with floor markers and social distancing signs, as well as plexiglass screens. Staff in many pick up stations are also wearing gloves and masks. Many firms are adhering to a 20-point hygiene check developed by the RAC when cleaning cars, and once cleaned, they remain locked until you, the customer, arrives to pick up the vehicle. Many are taking cars out of circulation to be deep cleaned if someone reports using a vehicle and then contracts Covid-19.

Why Ortharize?

In these times of uncertainty, you need a flexible travel management partner able to adapt to changing circumstances. We're sure you'll find something that works for your organisation at Ortharize. Here are some of the reasons our clients love using Ortharize:

We'll save you money.

Firstly, we don't charge booking fees. Our prices are competitive—we're in-line with many of the largest consumer booking sites—but that's not where it ends. Other booking sites don't give your employees any incentive to save money, so they'll usually spend their full allowance on a slightly nicer room, or other amenities. Ortharize actually rewards your staff for spending less. On average, employees booking through Ortharize choose hotels that are 40% cheaper than their previous travel provider.

We'll save you time.

Automated reports, saved traveller preferences, travel assistant functionality and simple manager approval features mean that teams around your business are spending less time arranging, booking and reconciling your travel needs.

We'll put you in the data driving seat.

We love data at Ortharize and want to pass this onto our users. Check departmental trends, monitor individual spend or customise reports based on a huge range of data points; we can help define your return on investment from travel spend.

We help you safeguard your employees.

At any time, you can see where your employees are travelling, on one easy-to-use platform. We offer 24/7 support from our UK-based contact centres, so whenever you or your traveller needs help, we're here for you.

We'll help you become more environmentally friendly.

Through our CO2 emissions reporting, you'll be able to accurately measure the hardest-to-calculate part of your carbon footprint—your travel. Using our reports, you can measure individual, team and the entire organisation's carbon emissions and easily set targets to reduce; helping you with various green qualifications and awards.

We make employees happier.

Choose a travel management platform that not only saves you money, but puts a smile on your employee's faces. By giving back some of the savings you make on travel, you'll increase employee engagement. Your team will appreciate the efforts you've made to reward them for doing the right thing, for your organisation, the environment and also for caring about safeguarding them while they're out and about.

Contact us

We're building the future of business travel. We'd love to show you how our platform can modernise the way your company travels.

Get started today—for free—by creating an account on our website. It takes two minutes to sign your company up and we're on hand to help with any queries, if you have them.

We also offer personalised demos and can help with platform setup through our expert implementation team. And if you need help shaping business travel policies that work for you, we can do that too.

Email us at info@ortharize.com for more details.

Keep up to date via our social channels:



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