

10 Pillars of Duty of Care

for Safe Travel & Meetings
in the COVID-19 Era

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Prevue turned to the experts to lay out a 10-point plan for safe travel and events in the COVID-19 era.

Many thanks to Andrea Doyle and Steve Grasso for their contributions. Edited by Barbara Scofidio

Pillar 1: CDC Guidelines

Despite some confusing messaging, the CDC remains the final word on safe practices for travel and meetings. The CDC continues to implore travelers to follow social distancing guidelines indoors and outdoors staying at least six feet apart from each other, to wear a face mask that keeps both the nose and mouth covered, to wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, to avoid contact with anyone who is sick, and to avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Among the CDC's latest changes have been to advise travelers to check state, local and territorial governments for requirements regarding quarantine rather than requiring a 14-day quarantine for all those returning from international destinations or areas with a high concentration of cases. [Click here](#) for more information.

In addition, the CDC updated guidance to its How COVID-19 Spreads web site, which includes information about the potential for airborne spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. The update acknowledges the existence of some published

reports showing limited, uncommon circumstances where people with COVID-19 infected others who were more than 6 feet away or shortly after the COVID-19-positive person left an area. In these instances, transmission occurred in poorly ventilated and enclosed spaces that often involved activities that caused heavier breathing, like singing or exercise. Such environments and activities may contribute to the buildup of virus-carrying particles.

The CDC's guidelines for events and gatherings are meant to supplement—not replace—state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules and regulations. The basic premise is common sense:

- The more people an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading.
- The higher the level of community transmission in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.
- The size of an event or gathering should be determined based on state, local, territorial or tribal safety laws and regulations.

Pillar 2: COVID Alerts/Online Tools

The web has many helpful tools that can help planners assess their meeting's risk based on the destination, and alert them to changes at the state and local level.

The COVID risk assessment tool developed by Georgia Tech and Applied Bioinformatics Laboratory tells how likely it is that at least one person at any event of a given size is infectious (not how likely it is that an attendee would be exposed or infected with COVID-19 at the event). The risk level is the estimated chance (0-100 percent) that at least 1 COVID-19-positive individual will be present at an event, given the size of the event and the state or county in which it is taking place. Users can modify event size from 10 to 10,000. There are various assumptions, including an "ascertainment bias" that there are 10 times more cases than are being reported, and an assumption of "uniformity and independence" (that every person who comes to the event is exactly as likely to be infected as anyone else in the county and that their chances of being infected are independent from each other).

This COVID-19 Tracker from Microsoft's Bing search engine, a tracking map, includes stats by country, outbreak maps and comparisons.

COVID Alerts was created by COVID Act Now, a nonprofit organization that consists of a multidisciplinary team of technologists, epidemiologists, health experts and public

policy leaders working to provide disease intelligence and data analysis on any COVID threat in the US. COVID Alerts lets you know when the COVID threat level, based on metrics critical to monitoring COVID, such as infection growth rate and ICU capacity, changes in the county or state you are considering. Sign up to receive alerts about the state and/or county you want to keep track of.

Pillar 3: Meetings Industry Accepted Practices

The Events Industry Council (EIC), a global federation of more than 30 member organizations, released the Meeting and Event Design Accepted Practices Guide to serve as a resource and educational tool for industry professionals to utilize to put curated resources and materials into practice.

This EIC guidance is intended to be global in nature. The work will continue to evolve through regional workshops led by task force members, to ensure it is applicable or customized to each region.

To rebuild trust that in-person meetings and events can happen safely, the guide provides these customizable tools:

- A meeting and event decision grid
- Guidelines and a code of conduct for pre-event, post-event and onsite
- Meeting and event success metrics (pre- and post-vaccine)





- Attendee communication considerations
- Resource guide

Included in the Accepted Practices Guide is a code of conduct, meant to serve as a tool for event organizers to engage all meeting participants in the health and safety of events. Click here for a copy of the guide.

Pillar 4: Sanitization Protocols

The Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), a division of the International Sanitary Supply Association (ISSA), gives GBAC STAR accreditation to those hotels, convention centers and other facilities that have outbreak prevention, response and recovery in place. GBAC STAR Facility Accreditation is a program designed with the necessary protocols and best practices for biohazard response.

GBAC STAR is the gold standard of facilities. The Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta became the first convention center in the country to complete the GBAC Star program. This accreditation means that a facility has:

- Established and maintained a cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention program to minimize risks associated with infectious agents like the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).
- The proper cleaning protocols, disinfection techniques, and work practices in place to combat biohazards and infectious disease.
- Highly skilled cleaning professionals who are trained for

outbreak and infectious disease preparation and response. The American Hotel & Lodging Association's Safe Stay is an industry-wide, enhanced standard of health and safety protocols. They include guidance on the following:

- Employee & guest health
- Employee responsibilities
- Cleaning products and protocols
- Physical distancing.

The Safe Stay guidelines can be found at www.ahla.com/SafeStay.

The U.S. Travel Association has also created detailed guidance for travel-related businesses to help keep their customers and employees safe. "Travel in the New Normal" describes vigorous measures the travel industry will follow to reduce the risk of COVID-19 during each and every step of a traveler's journey. Click here to read the document in its entirety.

Pillar 5: Safe F&B Practices

As the axis of the food & beverage world has shifted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, safety and cleanliness have taken center stage.

Buffets, as we know them, are a thing of the past. If they survive this pandemic at all, expect one-sided offerings where staff will serve your attendees; self-serve may never return. More common are boxed lunches and dinners with colleagues carefully seated 6 feet apart from each other and the use of plate covers to protect food from airborne pathogens.

Passed hors d'oeuvres at cocktail receptions are also a thing of the past for now, as are glasses of wine left out on trays for guests to help themselves (instead, hotels are using wine glass covers).

Coffee breaks also look much different than we remember them. The days of attendees helping themselves to coffee and tea have been replaced by staff making each person's favorite hot beverage at a barista bar.

Not all properties have given up entirely on buffets. Rosen Hotels & Resorts plans to continue with buffets, although food will be served by banquet servers wearing masks and gloves to keep guests from touching serving utensils. All buffets are single-sided only with a distance barrier created to deter guests direct contact with food items. Rolled silverware is offered with the option of rolled plasticware, and all plated meal functions are served with no pre-set courses. Napkin service has been suspended, and all waters are pre-set with disposable lids.

Pillar 6: Face Masks in the Air

The 7 airlines that are part of the trade group Airlines for America (A4A) are increasing the enforcement of its mandatory face mask policies, and those passengers who do not abide may have their flying privileges revoked.

Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Hawaiian Airlines, JetBlue Airways, Southwest Airlines and United Airlines are implementing the following policies regarding face masks:

- 1. Preflight Communications:** Each airline will clearly articulate its individual face covering policy in communications with customers, which may require passengers to acknowledge the specific rules during the check-in process.
- 2. Onboard Announcements:** Once on the aircraft, crew members will announce specific details regarding the carrier's face covering policy including the consequences passengers could face for violating the policy.
- 3. Consequences for Noncompliance:** Each carrier will determine the appropriate consequences for passengers who are found to be in noncompliance of the airline's face covering policy up to and including suspension of flying privileges on that airline.
- 4. The measures are expected to remain in place throughout the COVID-19 crisis.** In addition to enforcement of face covering policies, passengers may see several other changes and updates to the travel experience, including intensive cleaning protocols, (in some cases to include electrostatic cleaning and fogging procedures) to sanitizing cockpits, cabins and key touchpoints. Carriers have also implemented



a range of policies, including back-to-front boarding, to help allow for distancing between people.

Pillar 7: Temperature Checks, Social Distancing & Face Masks at Meetings

There are multiple gateways for social distancing, from transportation to the meeting to traffic flow and room capacity at the meeting. It's instructive to look at how other live meetings happening right now are putting safety protocols in place.

In late August, ALHI held the Back to Business Experiential Forum at the Omni Dallas. As a showcase for doing all the right things, the meeting paid painstaking attention to detail. A copy of the Event Industry Council's Meetings and Events Code of Conduct was included in the conference materials and ALHI even held a conference call with attendees before the event to discuss safety protocols. Attendees retained the same seats throughout the event, including when they ate their pre-packaged lunches, and were assigned to groups for entering and exiting to avoid overcrowding.

The recent Apparel & Accessories Market at Dallas Market Center was designed to facilitate social distancing, with features such as open parking, large entryways and plentiful escalators. Registration was set up in multiple areas and access to the showrooms was limited to allow required spacing. There were temperature checks for each person entering the marketplace and a requirement for either medical masks or cloth face coverings to be worn at all times throughout the building common areas, except while eating in designated locations.

At the Georgia Association of Promotional Products

Professionals Trade Show at the Cobb Galleria Center's exhibit hall, safety measures included temperature checks, masks, distancing signage, one-way entry/exiting and wide aisles.

New Yorkers lined up for blocks to experience the flagship Krispy Kreme store opening in Times Square. The main attraction was a doughnut factory—the Doughnut Theater Experience—where visitors could follow the doughnuts' journey behind a Plexiglas wall as they traveled along a conveyor belt and under a glowing glaze waterfall to be delivered right to the display case. To be safe, attendees were offered a chance to reserve a time to visit on the Krispy Kreme web site.

In Germany, IFA—the biggest trade show featuring consumer electronics and home appliances outside the U.S.—attracted 4,000 people to Messe Berlin and included precautions such as the recommended use of masks and social distancing and a traffic light system to warn attendees if a hall became overcrowded.

Pillar 8: Pre- and Post-Event Testing/Reporting

There's a lot to learn about COVID-19 testing protocols from the Republican National Convention in Charlotte, NC.

Pre-convention, the Republican National Committee advised attendees to practice enhanced social distancing, stay home as much as possible and avoid crowds. All attendees were sent a test in the mail and required to have a negative test result before traveling to the event. The RNC created an online portal where they have been required to report daily since last week on any symptoms they are experiencing.





All delegates and workers were again tested for COVID-19 upon their arrival in Charlotte using rapid swabs, with the results back in hours. Each day, delegates were screened for symptoms of COVID-19 at the Westin Hotel, where they stayed. A wristband provided access to the Charlotte Convention Center. (Atrium Health conducted similar screenings at the convention center for the others who are attending.)

Post-convention, the RNC recommended that all attendees continue to socially distance for 14 days. A post-event survey of 252 delegates found no known positive tests. Mecklenburg County health officials reported that four people at the RNC — two attendees and two local support staff — were diagnosed with COVID-19 before their arrival at the convention and 14 of their contacts were advised to quarantine.

Pillar 9: Testing Before Air Travel

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has called for universal, systematic testing for all travelers before departure. PCR Testing at the border is being tested internationally, in locations such as Germany, France, Iceland and Austria, Tokyo and Dubai.

At London's Heathrow Airport, a new COVID-19 testing facility enables arriving passengers to be tested for the virus upon landing and know just hours later if they have tested positive. More than 13,000 passenger tests can be conducted each day, a number that can be further scaled with demand. A second confirmatory test follows a few days after the first. With government approval, travelers who test negative to both tests would then be released early from quarantine much sooner than the standard 14 days.

A new digital health “passport” program on flights

between London and New York and between Hong Kong and Singapore, enable travelers to provide certified COVID-19 test information to border officials upon arrival. The digital health pass, called CommonPass, was developed by Swiss-based nonprofit the Commons Project and the World Economic Forum; it is being presented to governments around the world. After travelers take a COVID-19 test at a certified lab and upload the results to their mobile phone, they can then complete any additional health questionnaires required by the destination country. CommonPass confirms compliance and generates a QR code that can be scanned by airline staff and border officials either from a mobile device or one that has been printed out.

There are drawbacks, most notably the accuracy of the tests and the time difference between the tests, neither of which guarantee a 100 percent success rate in ensuring those with the virus are detected, as well as who absorbs the cost—the traveler or the local government.

Pillar 10: Hybrid Options

As travel opens up and live meetings resume, there will still be a portion of the population who can not travel for a multitude of reasons, from having pre-existing health conditions to caring for parents who are in a high-risk age range. Meeting planners will need to make their events accessible to these constituents for the foreseeable future by offering a hybrid option.

In addition, meeting organizers are finding that offering elements of the event online expands its reach to a larger group than would traditionally attend. When done correctly, the online portion can generate revenue and supply video for future educational and promotional use.

ATLANTIS

PARADISE ISLAND BAHAMAS

MEETINGS • INCENTIVES • CONVENTIONS • EVENTS

It is Atlantis' number one-priority to ensure the health and safety of all guests. Years of experience have taught the leadership team that proactive prevention is the key to maintaining health and safety protocols.

Through its dedicated Emergency Preparedness Team and Environmental Health and Safety Managers, Atlantis ensure strict adherence and seamless implementation of best practices in all areas. And under the guidance of organizations such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), they have long developed a sophisticated approach to hotel safety.

During pre-con meetings, Atlantis' health and safety managers review all areas of concern in detail with meeting planners, including medical protocols, fire and safety systems, and emergency evacuation plans.

More recently, Atlantis has introduced additional best practices and guidelines focused on enhanced hotel cleaning practices, social interactions, and workplace protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The resort has partnered with the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic and launched the Atlantis "Clean & Safe Promise" to ensure the guests' health, safety, and well-being. For meetings and events, this means a comprehensive approach to cleaning and sanitization of all meeting spaces, shared equipment, and banquet amenities as well as physical distancing protocols for all team members and guests. With shared knowledge and innovative approaches, Atlantis has reimaged every aspect of the guest experience to deliver a healthy and safe resort environment.

About Atlantis

Surrounded by the bluest ocean and miles of white-sandy beaches, Atlantis Paradise Island is a lush oceanside resort located on Paradise Island in The Bahamas. With world-class accommodations and bespoke service, this resort connects guests to the Bahamian culture and marine life offering an array of truly remarkable experiences.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/meetings-at-atlantis-bahamas>

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Dedicated to making event planning a breeze, Kalahari Resorts and Conventions has everything you need — first-class service, up to 1,000 guest rooms, premium chef-led dining, customizable meeting spaces, spa treatments, America's biggest and best in family-friendly amenities, and a whole lot more — all under one roof.

We recently expanded the ideal meeting and event experience by doubling the size of our Wisconsin and Pennsylvania convention centers to over 200,000+ square feet, bringing those up to size with our Ohio property at 215,000 square feet. Plus, with locations in the Midwest, East Coast and Southwest that are under two hours away from several major cities, Kalahari offers a short commute but enough separation for guests to completely focus on their convention experience.

Our venues are the ideal location for meetings and events of any size, from trade shows, exhibitions, conventions and conferences to faith-based retreats and other gatherings. Our dedicated teams have more 400 years of combined event experience planning more than 20,000 events.

Why choose Kalahari? From experienced staff and versatile, best-in-class meeting space to stunning accommodations, enviable amenities and conveniently located properties, your meeting or event is sure to leave a beyond-expectations, lasting impression.

About Kalahari Resorts and Conventions

Kalahari Resorts and Conventions in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, Sandusky, Ohio, the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania, and coming soon to Round Rock, Texas, delivers a "world-away" waterpark resort and conference experience beyond expectations. The authentically African-themed Kalahari Resorts, privately owned by the Nelson family, is home to America's largest indoor waterparks.

www.kalaharimeetings.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/kalahari-resorts-&-conventions/>

Phone: 855-411-4605



The South Padre Island Convention & Visitors Bureau is excited to get back to the business of serving clients, and is ready to provide a safe environment to successfully host meetings, conferences, or trade shows. With a commitment to guest safety, events and meetings will be handled responsibly by our experienced team.

The South Padre Island Convention Centre developed evolving reopening guidelines in accordance with local, state and federal mandates. The guidelines were created with guests, employees, and community safety in mind. The four-step reopening program includes the following: incremental occupancy, safety, health protocols, and prevention support.

The Convention Centre is implementing an incremental occupancy opening based on the recommended occupancy percentage by the state, with adjustments for physical distancing. Centre staff coordinates with each meeting planner to properly access their needs and ensure the safety of their attendees. Extensive safety measures have been implemented to include physical distancing, hand sanitizer stations, specific ingress and egress points, and signage displaying health protocols. Proper entry “no touch” temperature screenings are conducted as guests, vendors, and employees enter the facility. Once entered and screened, each person will receive a wristband indicating they have passed the screening. Centre staff has undergone training specified for the current health status that covered cleaning frequencies, sanitation, PPE procedures, and guest screenings.

The South Padre Island team has the duty to care about the safety of our guests. Although things may be a little different, South Padre Island is and will always be a great destination to meet.

About South Padre Island

South Padre Island is a tropical oasis located off the southern tip of Texas. This barrier island offers the unsurpassed beauty of the Laguna Madre Bay and the Gulf of Mexico and is the ideal year-round destination for visitors seeking a getaway from the daily grind.

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Tourism is the largest industry in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), contributing an estimated 60 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The destination and its meetings industry were experiencing positive momentum when the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) brought travel and tourism around the world to a halt.

The USVI reopened to leisure travelers on September 19, 2020, and remains committed to working with its partners to protect the health and safety of residents and visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Protocols and travel requirements have been implemented for all travelers aged five and older, and at this time, gatherings are limited to no more than 100 individuals for indoor and outdoor activities. The U.S. Virgin Islands has also implemented a “no mask, no service” policy.

Accommodation providers and venues have outlined protocols and guidelines to ensure the health and safety of its guests.

The Buccaneer on St. Croix, The Westin St. John Resort Villas and The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas are three of the larger resorts currently available to accommodate groups. Museums, historic forts, sugar mills and great houses are also available, providing meeting and event planners alternative options to safely connect in paradise.

As the U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Croix, St. John, St. Thomas and Water Island) continues to adapt to changing realities, destination stakeholders welcome groups to reconnect with the vibrant culture, delectable cuisine, storied past and beautiful people.

For more information, visit www.visitusvi.com and www.usviupdate.com.

About USVI

The U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Croix, St. John, St. Thomas, Water Island) is inviting, beautiful and alluring. With its rich culture and history, culinary diversity, breathtaking beaches, picturesque views, and off-the-beaten path experiences, the USVI offers all the natural amenities for travelers seeking a Caribbean experience with the comforts and conveniences of a U.S. destination. As a U.S. territory, no passports are required for U.S. citizens.

www.usviupdate.com



Haven Riviera Cancun Resort & Spa is part of Hipotels, which fully owns and operates 29 hotels, located exclusively in the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands and Andalusia. In 2015 Hipotels decided to develop its first Mexico/Caribbean hotel complex which will include 3 resorts and 1,500 rooms.

The first hotel - Haven Riviera Cancun - opened on October 5, 2018. This exclusive adults-only, all-suite, all-inclusive beachfront resort features 333 suites with king size beds, personalized mini-bars and aromatherapy, swim-out rooms, concierge and butler service, 24-hour room service, five restaurants, three snack bars, nine bars and the luxurious MySenses Spa offering spa suites and transformational treatments.

Haven Riviera Cancun recently reopened its doors with comprehensive "We Care – Safety First" COVID-19 protocols in place throughout the luxury resort. With these safety protocols in place, as well as a secluded beachfront location and expansive outdoor areas, Haven is uniquely positioned to host group events and incentives while ensuring a worry-free experience for their guests.

Scheduled to open in December 2021, the state-of-art Convention Center at Haven will offer 14,500 sq. ft. of premium meeting, conference and event space. Supported by the latest audio-visual technology, a dedicated kitchen and a short walk from all resort facilities, the Convention Center at Haven is sure to be one of the most unique meeting venues in the Mexican Caribbean.

Haven Riviera Cancun is a proud member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts LVX Collection, The Hotel Collection 2020 by American Express and recent winner of the 2020 Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Award.

For more information contact David Schwartz at 305-812-8381 or groups@havenresorts.com.