

Survey: Passengers confident in air travel safety, continue to support mask-wearing

The International Air Transport Association's (IATA) latest passenger survey has found that most travellers are confident about the safety of air travel and support mask-wearing in the near term. However, a majority have been found to be frustrated with the "hassle factor" around Covid-19 protocols, including confusion and uncertainty about travel rules, testing requirement, and excessive test costs.



Source: Andrew Donovan Valdivia via [Unsplash](#)

The survey of 4,700 travellers in 11 markets around the world shows that:

- Eighty-five percent believe aircrafts are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Sixty-five percent agree the air on an aircraft is as clean as an operating room

Among those who have travelled since June 2020, 86% felt safe onboard owing to Covid-19 measures:

- Eighty-nine percent believe protective measures are well implemented

- Ninety percent believe airline personnel do a good job of enforcing the measures

Passengers strongly support mask-wearing onboard (83%) and strict enforcement of mask rules (86%), but a majority also believe the mask requirement should be ended as soon as possible.

"Air travellers recognise and value the safety measures put in place to minimize the risk of Covid-19 transmission during air travel. And they support the continuation of these measures as long as necessary, but they also don't want the measures to become permanent. In the meantime, we all need to respect the rules and the safety of fellow passengers.

"It is unacceptable that unruly passenger incidents have doubled compared to 2019, and the increase in physically abusive behaviour is a particular cause for great concern," said Willie Walsh, IATA's director-general.

At the same time, participants admit that they struggle with the Covid-related rules and requirements and that this impacts their willingness to travel:

- Seventy percent thought the rules and the accompanying paperwork were a challenge to understand
- Sixty-seven percent saw arranging testing as a hassle
- Eighty-nine percent agreed governments must standardize vaccinations/testing certifications

"These responses should be a wake-up call to governments that they need to do a better job of preparing for a restart. Almost two-thirds of respondents plan to resume travel within a few months of the pandemic being contained (and borders opened). And by the six-month mark almost 85% expect to be back to travel.

"To avoid overwhelming airports and border control authorities, governments need to agree to replace paper-based processes with digital solutions like the IATA Travel Pass for vaccine and testing documentation," said Walsh.

Almost nine out of ten respondents like the idea of using a mobile app to store their travel health credentials and 87% support a secure digital system to manage health credentials. However, 75% say they will only use an app if they have full control of their vaccine/test data.

"IATA Travel Pass enables travellers to receive, store and share their health information with governments and airlines but they always keep control of the information on their own mobile device. Now is the time for governments to facilitate digital solutions like IATA Travel Pass to avoid chaos at airports as travel begins to return," said Walsh.

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