

FAQs: The Cruise Community and COVID-19

Updated 5 August 2020

Until when are CLIA cruise lines voluntarily suspending U.S. passenger operations?

CLIA ocean-going cruise lines made the decision on 5 August 2020 to voluntarily extend the ongoing suspension of U.S. passenger operations until at least 31 October 2020 with the understanding that we will revisit a possible further extension on or before September 30, 2020. Should conditions in the U.S. change, and it becomes possible to consider short, modified sailings, we would consider an earlier restart. This would be pursued in consultation with the CDC and other policymakers.

The industry announcement is not intended to prohibit any member from applying a longer extension based on each company's unique itineraries, demographics, and other circumstances.

Which cruise ships are affected by the voluntary suspension of U.S. passenger operations?

The voluntary suspension applies to all CLIA members to which the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) No Sail Order applies (vessels with capacity to carry 250 persons or more).

Why did CLIA cruise lines voluntarily decide to extend the suspension of passenger operations from the United States?

Although we found the alignment between CLIA's previous voluntary suspension to 15 September and the CDC's current No-Sail Order date of 30 September valuable, we feel a further extension is prudent and will allow for the consideration of CDC's RFI input that is due on 21 September. The spike in COVID-19 cases is, of course, an additional factor.

When did CLIA cruise lines first suspend passenger operations?

CLIA cruise lines responded swiftly to this unprecedented global crisis based on the information that was available, and under the guidance of prevailing health authorities. This culminated in the voluntary suspension of worldwide cruise passenger operations in mid-March, immediately following the WHO's pandemic declaration.

When will passenger operations resume?

CLIA ocean-going member cruise lines will sail again when the time is right, and that timing will be based on a number of factors, including, most importantly, input from scientists and medical experts. Given the significant economic contributions of the cruise industry to global economies, CLIA member cruise lines look forward to contributing to the global economic and societal recoveries, in addition to welcoming valued guests back onboard and introducing them to their next adventures.

Why have some cruise line companies extended their suspensions of U.S. passenger operations beyond 31 October?

There are several factors that will influence the timing of the resumption of cruise voyages. In addition to the CDC No Sail order, ports around the globe need to be open for tourism. Global travel restrictions could also be a factor. We recognize some cruise lines are currently sailing on limited itineraries.

Will passenger operations resume in other countries prior to the United States?

Cruises are resuming in other markets in a gradual, phased-in manner, since the virus is at different stages in different parts of the world. At least in some regions, we have seen the first cruises are shorter voyages with more limited itineraries. Cruise lines remain actively engaged with our partners at the local, national and international levels to facilitate alignment and inform cruise industry protocols as they advance through the planning process.

Is CLIA leading an effort to establish industry-wide protocols for ocean-going members to resume operations?

CLIA is working to establish an industry-wide COVID-19 policy for its ocean-going cruise line members. Our efforts are being informed by the very detailed work being performed by the ocean-going lines, in which CLIA is actively engaged. Once agreed upon by CLIA ocean-going cruise line members, the policy will be added to CLIA's compendium of policies required of all CLIA ocean-going cruise line members.

What are cruise lines doing during the pause in passenger operations?

During the voluntary pause of passenger operations, CLIA cruise line members are using this time to explore new ideas and concepts to further enhance already stringent public health protocols and policies. Additionally, caring for and repatriating crewmembers is the number one priority for CLIA cruise line members right now, especially in light of the complexities involved due to travel restrictions and differing policies and approaches imposed by local and national governments around the world. Finally, with passenger operations suspended, CLIA member cruise lines are exploring various ways to give back during this time, including giving food donations and making ships available for care and excess housing.

Why do we know so much more about COVID-19 cases on cruise ships compared to other settings?

Even though confirmed cases of COVID-19 onboard cruise ships account for a fraction of a percent of worldwide confirmed cases, the impact of COVID-19 on cruise lines has been in the spotlight over the past few months. This is understandable for many reasons—including the fact that cruising is a unique form of travel which appeals to a diverse cross section of people. Moreover, CLIA ocean-going cruise ships are subject to stringent reporting requirements and have credentialed doctors and nurses onboard, which is why so much more is known about the number of confirmed cases onboard cruise ships than cases in other settings, even though cruising is the smallest of any comparable travel or entertainment sector.

How do CLIA member cruise lines promote public health?

Interestingly, ocean-going cruise ships are the only form of travel or passenger transportation that must be medically equipped to care for passengers or crew in the event of illness. As a condition of membership within CLIA, ocean-going cruise lines are required to fit their ships with medical facilities that meet the standards set forth by the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), which require that doctors and medical personnel be available onboard 24/7. Additionally, cruise ships must have an examination room, an intensive care room and equipment for processing labs, monitoring vital signs and administering medications.

How do CLIA cruise lines keep cruise ships clean and sanitary?

Keeping cruise ships clean and sanitary is a top priority for CLIA member cruise lines. The industry has a longstanding collaboration with the CDC and The [Vessel Sanitation Program](#) (VSP) to make sure ships meet strict sanitation guidelines. As part of the program, cruise ship crews are trained in sanitation and health practices and ships undergo unannounced inspections twice a year, with scores made available to the public. No other travel, tourism or entertainment industry has this type of federal program or oversight.

When it comes to cleaning procedures, crews clean and sanitize surfaces known for transmitting germs, multiple times throughout the day, such as handrails, door handles and faucets. At the end of a voyage and before a new one begins, ships are cleaned completely from top to bottom. CLIA cruise lines also help to educate cruise passengers on personal health and safety practices. Cruise passengers are reminded to wash their hands regularly and hand sanitizers are readily available in public locations. This may sound minor, but hand hygiene is critically important to protecting everyone on board.

Do cruise lines pay taxes in the U.S.?

Short answer: yes. A common misconception about the cruise industry is that cruise lines pay little to no taxes in the United States—this is fundamentally not true. Cruise lines pay billions of dollars in fees and taxes in the U.S. every year, while generating strong economic returns to communities worldwide. Cruise industry spending in the United States supported more direct taxes per dollar of output than certain other sectors, including manufacturing and construction. Taxes supported by cruise industry spending are broadly consistent with other industries, partly as a result of the substantial head taxes and port charges that are paid by cruise lines. On average, each \$1 million the cruise industry spends in the USA supports approximately \$102,000 of direct U.S. federal, state, and local tax revenue.

Will the cruise industry recover?

Our colleagues across the cruise industry, and the communities we serve, are facing a challenge that is unprecedented in scale. The global cruise industry supports over 1.17 million jobs around the world, including travel agents, suppliers, and service providers across a wide spectrum of industries and sectors. Unfortunately, every day of the suspension results in thousands of those jobs lost. Still, people love to cruise, and that is part of what makes the cruise industry so resilient in the face of adversity. We are confident that people will return to the seas when the time is right, just as they will return to restaurants, bars, movie theaters and the like. Despite current challenges, the cruise community will emerge from this global crisis stronger and even better than before.

What is the economic impact of the suspension of cruise operations in the United States?

Cruise activity supports multiple sectors of the U.S. economy, from ground and air transportation to food and beverage, lodging, manufacturing, agriculture, travel agencies, ports, hotels, professional services, and a broad range of supply chain of industries that stretches across the United States, the vast majority of which are small businesses.

Here are some additional facts about the economic impact of the cruise industry and the impact of the ongoing suspension of passenger operations:

- In 2018, the cruise industry generated **\$53 billion** in economic activity in the United States and supported over **421,000** American jobs.
- Every **30** cruisers from U.S. ports support **one** American job.
- The **top 10** states benefitting economically from the cruise industry include:

- Florida
- California
- Texas
- New York
- Alaska
- Washington
- Georgia
- Illinois
- New Jersey
- Louisiana
- Each day of the suspension of cruise operations in the U.S. results in a total loss of approximately **\$110 million** in economic activity and up to **800** American jobs.
- From mid-March, when the suspension began, through the end of September, we estimate that the suspension of cruise passenger operations will result in a total loss of **163,700** direct and indirect American jobs and **\$8.6** billion in total wages

For more information about the economic impact of the cruise industry in the United States, including the top ten states benefitting from cruise activity, please visit: [CLIA 2018 Economic Analysis](#).