Coronavirus and the Motorcoach, Group Travel and Tourism Industry

What are the facts? How do we get through this period of uncertainty?
COVID-19: A MEDIA NIGHTMARE

coronavirus

let's find out what makes you So scary
TIPS TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

HEALTHY TRAVEL PRACTICES

• Wash hands often
• Cough into your elbow and sneeze into a tissue
• Consult with a doctor before traveling when sick
• Stay up-to-date on vaccinations
• Avoid contact with people who are already sick
• Avoid contact with animals while traveling
• Clean frequently touched objects and surfaces
• Be aware of latest travel advisories from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention

COVID-19 “DON’TS”

• Go to work or crowded areas when sick
• Touch your eyes, nose and mouth
• Use face masks (the CDC does not recommend face masks for general U.S. public to prevent the spread of COVID-19)
• Panic. Get the facts and follow guidance from government sources and health professionals
HEALTHY COMPANY PRACTICES

• Regular and added Cleaning where and when appropriate:
  • Handrails for entering and exiting the vehicle
  • Arm rests
  • Driver steering wheel and dash area
  • Head rests
  • Windowsills
  • Restroom door handles and handrails
  • Vehicle sprayed well with Lysol disinfectant spray or similar product on a regular basis
  • Baggage door handles interior as well as exterior

• The EPA has put out a list of suggested products to use for cleaning. We have added that list to our website.

• The CDC offers tips on how to clean and disinfect surfaces as well as linens and towels: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/cleaning-disinfection.html#disinfect

• Have hand sanitizer and wipes available on vehicle for operator and passenger usage

• If a passenger or driver starts showing symptoms of the flu or coronavirus, the driver will notify dispatch immediately.
EMPLOYEE PROTECTION

• As part of Continuity of Operations, the health and welfare of our employees is critical, this includes drivers, maintenance, cleaning and administrative staffs.

• Employee protections are also a primary focus of Congressional interest, in terms of developing assistance packages.

• Keep in mind, federal law requires employers to provide a safe and healthful workplace for employees, and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is taking action to assist employers and employees.

• Specifically, the DOL has issued guidelines to assist companies with protecting their workforces, including:
  • Practical guidance for preventing the spread of COVID-19
  • Information on safe work practices
  • Appropriate personal protective equipment or PPE

• Like the CDC, OSHA has established a COVID-19 webpage to provide information specifically tailored for workers and employers.

• And the DOL Wage and Hour Division is also providing guidance on common issues employers and employees face when responding to COVID-19
CREATE A CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP)

• Identify essential functions and key personnel

• Identify vital records, systems and equipment
  • Consider policies, human resource responsibilities, PPI
  • Communications systems
  • Key assets

• Alternate work sites/arrangements
  • Include provisions for staff to work remotely or to telework
  • Make certain you have proper equipment (laptops, tablets, cell phones, etc.)
  • Ensure that home systems have the proper software and bandwidth (speed) to accommodate a remote worker
  • Make certain all licenses from software providers are up to date
  • If remote, encourage staff to check emails and phone messages regularly to be able to
CREATE A CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP)

• Protection of Assets
  • Establish policies and procedures for what to do if employees or passengers exhibit symptoms
  • Establish cleaning protocols for equipment and office space.

• Communication
  • Customers
  • Employees
  • Vendors
As part of COOP planning, Company practices should include:

• Identify “Key” positions, establish a task group within the company, and cross-train staff to back up in the event of illness.

• Educate on leave/telecommute policies:
  • If you have a fever or any signs of illness – STAY home, do not bring the bug to work.
  • If an ill employee must work, make attempts to allow them do so from home, when possible.
    • Use social media resources such as Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, etc. for meetings. Slack or Google Hangouts can be used for communication amongst work groups.
    • Be mindful of increased cybersecurity threats

• Monitor the latest updates from the CDC and most current information regarding the Coronavirus closely, while partnering with the industry associations, and community leaders
GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICES

COOP Company practices, continued:

- Have hand sanitizer and wipes available at front desks, concierge stations, hostess stands, offices, maintenance facilities and on vehicles for operator and passenger usage.

- Establish policy for identification and actions when an employee or customer exhibits signs or symptoms of illness.
  - E.g. - If a passenger or driver starts showing symptoms of the flu or coronavirus, the driver will notify dispatch immediately.

- Provide guidance and updates to your customers
  - What your company is doing to ensure safe travel

- Keep your employees and customers informed on company actions
  - Cleaning schedules
  - Leave policies

- Reach out to your vendors/business partners
  - Be proactive in working out arrangements as necessary
• Congress passed and the president signed emergency legislation last week providing $8.3 billion for the US to respond to the coronavirus:

  • $4 billion was for diagnostic tests

  • $2.2 billion for the CDC with $1 billion for state and local response efforts

  • $20 million was for disaster assistance loan for small business
• Separate and apart from the recent legislation, the President is also working on an economic package, BUT, reportedly it will leave out for now any aid for the travel industry.

• As outlined by Trump in remarks Monday, the proposal will likely include a payroll tax cut and a short-term expansion of paid sick leave, according to the people.

• White House wants to find a way to help airlines and hospitality companies reeling from a plunge in demand from travelers, but administration officials remain uncertain about the best way to do so.

• Elements of the package could still shift, including the payroll tax changes, which drew opposition from House Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal (D-Mass.) and Congressional leaders
Every member of Congress, House of Representatives and Senate, needs to hear your voice and how you have been impacted.

ABA has a letter template that you can use to email your Congressman:

- You can find your Rep’s contact details here: https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative
- You can find your Senator’s contact details here: https://www.senate.gov/senators/How_to_correspond_senators.htm

ABA’s staff and tax lobbying firm are reaching out to the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee to tell the industry’s story as any economic package will go through these committees.

Contact ABA at abainfo@buses.org if you do not know who your U.S. Representative or Senator.
March 10, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
G-220
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the American Bus Association, I urge you to include the motorcoach, tour and travel industry explicitly in any economic assistance package Congress needs to address the economic downturn caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). With the worldwide outbreak continuing to spread, the devastating impact on travel and transportation operators is compounded. As Congress and the Administration review and develop strategies to conduct vital and targeted interventions to help workers, firms, and industries facing severe economic losses in this sector, ABA wants to ensure that motorcoach, tour and travel industries are not forgotten, as suggested by recent media reports.

The ABA is the oldest, largest, and most respected voice of the motorcoach, tour and travel industries. Our Association represents private motorcoach operators, tour operators, and all forms of small businesses supporting the travel industry. Our motorcoach members engage in providing public transportation services through intercity scheduled bus service, commuter and charter operations, intercity bus transportation, charter operations, and in some cases contract services for public transit authorities. Collectively, the motorcoach industry provides nearly 500 million passenger trips annually. Our ABA membership also includes tour operators, transportation-related organizations, and producers and service suppliers, all in support of the travel industry.

The motorcoach, tour, and travel industries are dominated by small businesses, and most often these are family owned, multiplexed businesses. These types of small businesses are not capable of withstanding even a modest downturn in domestic travel and tourism. Let alone the devastating effects the travel industry is currently experiencing. We are hearing daily from our members who are suffering a significant decline in business due to travel cancellations, and the situation is expected to further deteriorate in the coming weeks and months. According to the U.S. Travel Association’s Travel Trends Index (TTI), international travel to the U.S. will fall 6.6% over the next three months, with the COVID-19 outbreak continuing to fuel the global economy.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Pantuso
President & CEO
American Bus Association

cc: The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
The Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
The Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Richard H. Neal
Chairman
The Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
The Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives

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The Administration and Congress will likely be working on several stimulus and aid packages in the days ahead.

ABA sent a letter to the President and let him know how the coronavirus has impacted your businesses.

People to address in the Administration:

- President Donald Trump
- Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin
- Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao
- Administrator of SBA Jovita Carranza
- Director, National Economic Council Larry Kudlow
March 10, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of the American Bus Association, I urge you to ensure that any assistance provided by the Administration to address the economic downturn due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and task forces established to address business needs, explicitly include the motorcoach, tour and travel industries. With the worldwide outbreak continuing to spread, the devastating impact on travel and transportation operators is compounded. As your Administration reviews and develops strategies to conduct timely and targeted interventions to help workers, firms and industries facing severe economic losses by this outbreak, ABA wants to ensure the motorcoach, tour and travel industries are not forgotten.

The ABA is the oldest, largest and most respected voice of the motorcoach, tour and travel industries. Our Association represents private motorcoach operators, tour operators and all facets of small businesses supporting the travel industry. Our motorcoach members engage in providing public transportation services through intercity scheduled bus service, commuter and shuttle operations, school bus transportation, charter operations, and in some cases contract services for public transit authorities. Collectively, the motorcoach industry provides nearly 600 million passenger trips annually. Our ABA membership also includes tour operators, tourism-related organizations, and products and service suppliers, all in support of the travel industry.

The motorcoach, tour and travel industries are dominated by small businesses, and most often these are family owned, multi-generational businesses. These types of small businesses are not capable of withstanding even a modest downturn in economic travel and tourism. But alone the devastating situation the travel industry is currently experiencing. We are hearing daily from our members who are suffering a significant decline in business due to travel concerns, and the situation is expected to further deteriorate in the coming weeks and months. According to the U.S. Travel Association’s Travel Trends Index (TTI), international inbound travel to the U.S. will fall 6.9% over the next three months, with the COVID-19 outbreak continuing to roll the global economy.

As the Administration aggressively seeks measures to combat the economic downturn resulting from the spread of COVID-19, we implore you to keep in mind the myriad of small, family owned businesses engaged in motorcoach, tour and travel operations. Our members provide a vital link for rural communities, connecting employees, school children, and price-sensitive travelers. These businesses need assistance to remain sustainable through this downturn.

ABA stands ready to work with the Administration in any way for the benefit of our members. Please have your staff contact me directly with any questions or concerns at 202-216-7299 or jsullivan@buses.org.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Panama
President and CEO
American Bus Association

cc: The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
    Secretary
    U.S. Department of Treasury

    Mr. Larry Kudlow
    Director
    National Economic Council

    The Honorable Elaine Chao
    Secretary
    U.S. Department of Transportation

    The Honorable Jovita Carranza
    Administrator
    U.S. Small Business Administration
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ABA RESOURCES

ABA’s Contact
Website:  https://www.buses.org/about/consumer-information/coronavirus-facts-not-fears

Phone number:  202-842-1645

CDC Website:  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

DOL/OSHA Website:  https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/

CISA Website:  https://www.cisa.gov/insights
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