

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

New private aviation clients will continue flying in luxury post-pandemic: survey

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Private aviation firms are likely to retain new clients post-pandemic. Image credit: Jet Linx

By SARAH RAMIREZ

While luxury hospitality brands continue to face an uphill climb during the COVID-19 pandemic, private aviation remains a bright spot in the industry.

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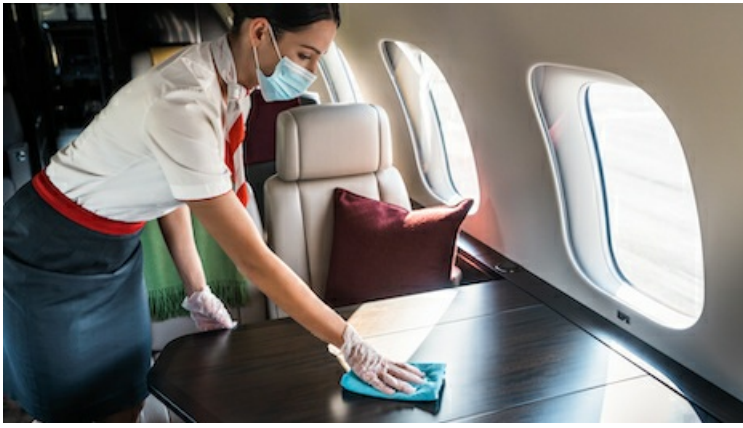
According to a new survey from online platform [Private Jet Card Comparisons](#), 41 percent of new private aviation clients plan to continue flying privately "regularly" after the pandemic. Furthermore, about four in 10 respondents who were flying privately before the pandemic expect to increase their usage once the pandemic ends.

The findings are based on an email survey of 145 private jet travelers, with participants split between clients who started flying privately before and during the pandemic.

Private aviation boon

A staggering 96 percent of new private jet travelers, those who started or restarted traveling by private planes since March 2020, will continue doing so after the pandemic. More than half, 55 percent, will fly privately "once in a while" compared to 41 percent who plan to do so "regularly."

Among existing private flyers, the majority, 55 percent, will continue to fly privately on a regular basis post-COVID-19.



Private aviation users trust private planes' COVID-19 protocols more than commercial airlines. Image credit: VistaJet

Thirty-eight percent will actually increase the percentage of air travel done through private planes after the pandemic, while only 7 percent plan to decrease the percentage of flights using private aviation.

Affluents are drawn to private flying for several reasons.

Amid the pandemic, respondents noted they are wary of commercial airlines' cleaning and social distancing measures. Another concern is that reduced flight schedules result in longer travel times and more layovers, increasing the potential for COVID-19 exposure.

Research from Austria's GlobeAir shows that there about 700 touchpoints exposing travelers to the risk of contagion during a single commercial flight, compared to about 20 interactions during private aviation flights.

With more countries, including the United States, setting COVID-19 testing requirements ([see story](#)), private flyers still expect to travel internationally.



Affluent travelers still expect to travel internationally. Image credit: VistaJet

Even though private jet passengers are still subject to these regulations, 68 percent of respondents still expect to fly internationally. Twenty-eight percent reported the new requirements make international travel less likely.

Flyers feel more confident about traveling outside of the U.S. if they can get tested locally before returning stateside, 31 percent, or if the hotel or resort provides onsite testing, 16 percent.

Pandemic impact

Demand for private air travel remains strong during the pandemic, primarily driven by new users who are concerned about the health risks of commercial aviation. Private Jet Card Comparisons cites research from McKinsey that estimates there about 100,000 regular private aviation users in the U.S., but 1.5 million affluent households have the budget for private air travel.

When COVID-19 began to spread, many affluent travelers opted for private jets to avoid commercial flights. To encourage private jet bookings, operators implemented testing procedures and more stringent cleaning between flights ([see story](#)).

Private Jet Card Comparisons' subscribers spent an average of \$211,607 on jet card purchases over the past 18 months. Additionally, private air charter use is now at 90 percent of pre-COVID levels.

In a survey conducted March 17-19, subscribers of Private Jet Card Comparisons who averaged 111 private jet flight

hours in 2019 were split on where 2020 would end up, with about a third forecasting a decrease, a third saying private flights will increase, and a third expect private travel to be flat.

Per the survey, while 39 percent said they had canceled trips due to COVID-19, 36 percent said they made unplanned trips, mainly relocating family members and bringing kids home as colleges closed ([see story](#)).

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