

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Private aviation addresses travelers' concerns with expanded cancellation policies

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*VistaJet Protect allows passengers to reduce their financial risk during COVID-19. Image credit: VistaJet*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Private aviation firms are introducing cancellation policies and travel protection programs as clients continue to plan to future trips against the backdrop of frequently changing restrictions and guidelines.

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This month, both VistaJet and private group charter company Air Partner have outlined plans to address client concerns about health and financial risks as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. There is currently no uniform approach to COVID-19-related cancellations in the private aviation industry.

### Protecting passengers

With the VistaJet Protect add-on, clients can reduce cancellation fees if a passenger tests positive for COVID-19 and cannot fly.

For a 20 percent premium on top of the price for the flight charter, VistaJet will remove all cancellation fees up to 48 hours prior to departure with proof of a positive PCR test. If the cancellation is less than 48 hours before departure, the cost of the VistaJet Protect will be applied to offset the outstanding cancellation fees.

Under standard terms, VistaJet clients are responsible for a 25 percent cancellation fee between booking and up to 7 days before a flight. This gradually increases the week leading up to departure, with a 100 percent penalty for cancellations within 24 hours.

Destinations around the world have differing timeframes for required COVID-19 testing, ranging from 72 hours to 120 hours. This reinforces the importance of cancellation policies during the pandemic.



*Private aviation firms are setting higher standards for COVID-19 screenings. Image credit: Air Partner*

Tour operator TCS World Travel has also introduced more flexible booking policies.

For group jet expeditions booked by April 30 and departing after Sept. 1, 2021, the TCS Refund Protection benefit allows travelers to cancel a trip or transfer payments to another trip up to six months before departure without additional fees. For cancellations, clients will receive a refund valued at 80 percent of the deposit with a future travel credit valued at 20 percent of the deposit.

With the TCS Flexibility Promise, clients booked by June 15, 2021 can postpone private custom trips at least 15 days prior to departure without incurring additional fees. TCS is also offering its own travel insurance plan.

Meanwhile, Air Partner, which specializes in private group charters particularly in the music and entertainment industries, has launched a COVID-19 travel protection program for world tours. The Tour Protect add-on program includes enhanced COVID-19 safety protocols, quick-response evacuation planning for any emergencies, 24/7 medical support and advanced security screenings.

"With so many considerations going into the production of live events, Tour Protect is designed to alleviate clientele of concerns and provide reliable air transportation to take them where they need to be and back on schedule," said David McCown, president of Air Partner, Americas, in a statement. "Air Partner's global network of resources, and 60 years of experience in the private aviation space, allows our team to manage these tours with the highest degree of care and service."

Although many governments and health agencies are still discouraging nonessential travel, the reality is there is pent-up demand among consumers particularly affluents and many economies rely heavily on tourism.

As a result, vaccine passports may be the next phase of safely allowing for travel, especially across international borders. Already, most countries as well as airlines and hotels have implemented safety measures such as requiring negative COVID-19 test results, mask-wearing, temperature checks, social distancing and more ([see stories](#)).