

ASTA Features in News for COVID 19



- ▶ [In coronavirus, \\$45-Billion Cruise Industry Faces a Big Challenge](#) (New York Times)
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- ▶ [In coronavirus, \\$45-Billion Cruise Industry Faces a Big Challenge](#) (Yahoo! News)
Erika Richter, the senior director of communications for ASTA, an industry group, said that demand for cruises, which had been on an upward trajectory before news of the coronavirus broke, was off from 10 to 15 percent according to some advisors.
- ▶ [After 'cruise ship from hell,' industry takes a financial hit](#) (Washington Post)
Erika Richter, a spokeswoman from ASTA, said some advisors are helping clients rebook for other areas or times of the year. One reported an increase in business for all-inclusive resorts in the Caribbean.
- ▶ [The coronavirus outbreak's latest casualty? The tourism industry](#) (New Jersey Online)
“We are not minimizing the concerns of travelers or the perceived threat from the coronavirus,” said Erika Richter, spokeswoman for ASTA, in an emailed statement.
- ▶ [Coronavirus outbreak hitting cruise industry where it hurts most - new business](#) (Seattle Times)
Sixty-four percent said they didn't have any cancellations as a result of the virus. Erika Richter, a spokeswoman for ASTA, said some advisors are helping clients rebook for other areas or times of the year.
- ▶ [Poll: Coronavirus fears create travel planning chaos, wreak havoc on international conferences](#) (SF Gate)
It's not just business travelers who are having second thoughts. According to ASTA, a “travel impact” survey it commissioned this month found that 25 percent of all U.S. travelers “have changed their travel plans because of coronavirus fears.”

- ▶ [Is it safe to travel amid the coronavirus outbreak? Here's what experts say](#) (People Magazine) “Safety is a personal decision that is different for every traveler,” Erika Richter, Senior Director of Communications at the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) tells PEOPLE, noting that the situation is continually evolving, and every traveler has a different level of risk tolerance.
- ▶ [Coronavirus spread sparks fears for American travelers](#) (NBC News)
Erika Richter, the senior director of Communications for ASTA, an advocacy organization, said she advise all travelers for now to keep calm.”
- ▶ [Coronavirus spread sparks fears for American travelers](#) (Yahoo! News)
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- ▶ ['Fear versus dreams': Coronavirus spread sparks fears for American travelers](#) (CNBC)
Erika Richter, the senior director of communications for the American Society of Travel Advisors, an advocacy organization, advised all travelers for now to “keep calm.”
- ▶ [How to think about travel as the coronavirus threat evolves](#) (The Washington Post)
“A travel advisor can help talk you through your list of options and pricing – they can help you come up with a plan A, B and C and having those back-up options on hand might put your mind at ease,” ASTA’s Richter said.
“In times like these, you need a travel advocate.”
- ▶ [Travel Agents and Websites Overwhelmed With Cancellations](#) (NBC 11 Bay Area San Jose KNTV-TV)
Every day, more NBC Bay Area viewers tell us they're having trouble cancelling upcoming airline travel plans. ASTA Board Member Marco Casto weighs in. Here's what you can do if you're one of them.

- ▶ [Cruise Cancellation Policies: What to Know](#) (Conde Nast Traveler)
"As you can imagine, the situation is rapidly changing day to day, and even hour by hour," says Erika Richter, senior director of communications for the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA), a trade association.
- ▶ [Coronavirus: Travel Facts, Not Fear](#) (WBRC - FOX 6 Birmingham)
Shelly Phillips. Owner, Travel By That Girl and President, Alabama ASTA goes on to the local FOX news to speak to the facts and dispel fears.
- ▶ [How to plan your travels in the era of coronavirus](#) (Boston Globe)
Travel advisers, who make a large percentage of their living from booking cruises, are bracing for the fallout. "There are 365 cruise ships sailing today with nearly 700,000 passengers aboard," said Zane Kerby, president and CEO of the American Society of Travel Advisors.
- ▶ [Will Travel Advisors Be Last in Line for Bailouts?](#) (Skift)
ASTA estimates that more than 140,000 people work in the travel agency industry in the U.S., with 98 percent of advisors considered small businesses. In addition to the 108,000 jobs created by retail locations across the country, an estimated 40,000 travel advisors work as independent contractors.
- ▶ [Cruise Cancellation Policies: What to Know](#) (MSN)
"As you can imagine, the situation is rapidly changing day to day, and even hour by hour," says Erika Richter, senior director of communications for the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA), a trade association.
- ▶ [Cruise lines' pep talks to travel advisors](#) (Travel Weekly)
An ASTA survey of more than 1,060 advisors in December showed that 33.6% of their annual sales came from cruise bookings, more than all-inclusive resorts and packages.
- ▶ [ASTA Encourages Grassroots Effort to Secure Travel Agent Relief](#) (Travel Market Report)
Congress is moving quickly to push forward relief packages for Americans as the coronavirus pandemic slams the travel industry. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell Thursday introduced the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, a massive economic stimulus plan in response to the coronavirus.

- ▶ [ASTA Pushes Congress for Specific Legislative Action](#) (Travel Pulse) The American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) is asking Congressional leaders to take specific actions to help protect more than 140,000 travel advisors. "We understand that many industries are facing critical challenges right now, and that requests specific to the travel sector range from \$58...
- ▶ [Should you cancel that cruise you bought? Don't panic.](#) (Laredo Morning Times) Erika Richter, communications director for the American Society of Travel Advisors, says, "Our message has been to keep calm and keep cruising...There's still time to take advantage of (seasonal) deals and prices. It's important to know that fear is contagious."
- ▶ [ASTA chief denounces U.S. recommendation to avoid cruising](#) (Travel Weekly) "Given the importance of the cruise industry to travel advisors, ASTA is gravely concerned about the impact of this advisory on our members' businesses," ASTA CEO Zane Kerby said in an emailed statement.
- ▶ [Executive tells Congress about coronavirus threat to travel agencies](#) (Travel Weekly) Testifying before the House Committee on Small Business on Tuesday about the impact of Covid-19 coronavirus on travel retailers, agency executive Jay Ellenby called "the past few weeks among the most difficult our agency has faced since 9/11."
- ▶ [ASTA "gravely concerned" about State Department cruise advisory](#) (Luxury Travel Advisor) Zane Kerby, president and CEO of ASTA, has issued a statement in response to the State Department advisory that U.S. citizens, particularly those with underlying health conditions, avoid traveling by cruise ship.

- ▶ [Royal Caribbean eases coronavirus restrictions but Norwegian holds firm](#) (Los Angeles Times)
Asked to respond to the restrictive coronavirus policies, ASTA declined to criticize the companies, saying in a statement: “We believe our cruise partners are in the best position to make decisions for the safety of their passengers and employees.”
- ▶ [Travel advisors’ customers skittish about coronavirus, but ‘this too shall pass’](#) (Travel Weekly)
But most advisors hadn’t seen a notable uptick in cancellations and were hopeful that any of the virus’ effects on travel would be short-lived. “this too shall pass,” said ASTA president and CEO Zane Kerby.
- ▶ [Coronavirus already impacting travel beyond China air routes](#) (Travel Weekly)
ASTA advised advisors against making recommendations to clients about whether or not to travel to affected areas, instead encouraging them to direct clients to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the most up-to-date recommendations related to coronavirus.
- ▶ [Travel Agents and Industry Executives Respond to Coronavirus Concerns](#) (Travel Market Report)
ASTA responds in a statement to TMP, a spokesperson for ASTA said that it has issued a travel advisor guidance document to its members to help them “to stay informed”; refer clients with questions to objective third-party sources of information like the CDC and State Department; and raise the issue proactively if a client is traveling to an affected area.
- ▶ [What You Need to Know Now About the Coronavirus Crisis in China](#) (Insider Travel Report)
What Travel Advisors Should Say: ASTA says its travel advisors are fielding questions from their clients about the situation. To help guide those conversations, it has issued a travel advisor guidance document, the essence of which is to stay informed; refer clients with questions to objective third-party sources of information like the CDC and U.S. State Department, and rise the issue proactively if a client is traveling to an affected area.

- ▶ [Spread of Coronavirus Cancels Travel and Events](#) (WebMD)
The message to travelers is that it depends on many variables, including their health condition, their destination, and time of year," says Erika Richter, senior director of communications for the American Society of Travel Advisors. The timing of the trip matters, she says.
- ▶ [Coronavirus, Government, and The Squeaky Wheel](#) (Travel Market Report)
The American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) is working hard on behalf of the retail industry to persuade the White House, Congress and state legislatures to enact meaningful and immediate support programs to sustain the retail advisor industry through the unprecedented hardships arising from the shutdown of the travel industry.
- ▶ [ASTA urges travel advisors to contact legislators about aid](#) (Travel Weekly)
ASTA has created an online portal for the travel agency community to get in touch with legislators about assistance in light of Covid-19's impact on their businesses. In its Travel Advisor Daily newsletter, ASTA called the coronavirus "the biggest challenge our industry has ever seen, including 9/11."
- ▶ [ASTA requests \\$13.7 billion in relief for travel agencies](#) (Travel Weekly)
ASTA on Tuesday released its official relief requests to Congress relating to the Covid-19 coronavirus' impact on travel agencies. ASTA wants a total of \$13.7 billion in loans and grants and additional funding for Small Business Administration loans.
- ▶ [ASTA Needs Advisor Input for Congressional Discussions](#) (Travel Market Report)
ASTA is asking all of its members to participate in a survey that will tell Congress and the White House just how much business has been impacted by the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

- ▶ [ASTA working with Congress on relief options for advisors](#) (Travel Weekly)
ASTA on Thursday said it was working with the Trump administration and Congress "to obtain a variety of relief options to help advisors, and the travel industry as a whole, weather this storm."
- ▶ [ASTA encourages members to conquer 'biggest challenge our industry ever faced'](#) (Travel Market Report)
"In the coronavirus crisis, we are facing the biggest challenge our industry has ever faced. There are a number of proposals being discussed in Congress and at the White House to provide assistance to the travel industry and the broader economy, and it is critical that we be a part of those conversations," ASTA wrote to its members.
- ▶ [ASTA urges GDSs to waive booking shortfall penalties](#) (Travel Weekly)
With the Covid-19 crisis sapping travel demand, ASTA is encouraging suppliers to make commissions available to travel advisors at the time of booking and GDSs to suspend or waive booking shortfall penalties.
- ▶ [From tourists to travelers](#) (Harvard Political Review)
Erika Richter, communications director of the ASTA, explained in an interview with the HPR that "when we look at the different generations and where they are in their life stages, we see millennials wanting to experience the world because they value experiences more than they value things."
- ▶ [The Facts About Traveler Safety Amid the Coronavirus Outbreak](#) (Travel Pulse)
Subsequently, a Travel Impact Survey Report conducted for ASTA earlier this month found that one-quarter of all U.S. travelers have changed their travel plans due to coronavirus fears.

- ▶ [All in This Together: Advisors Use Trade Community to Help Make it Through](#) (Travel Market Report)
The travel industry could be the hardest hit industry as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, and ASTA is working diligently on travel advisors behalf on Capitol Hill to secure relief for agencies. While much of what lays ahead is still unknown, advisors, in the meantime, are relying on one another for support during this difficult time.
- ▶ [ASTA seeks financial assistance for agencies](#) (Travel Mole)
The American Society of Travel Advisors is the latest travel industry trade group seeking financial aid from the government. ASTA is asking Congress for aid to safeguard the immediate future of members, which are mostly small businesses with little or no cash reserves.
- ▶ [Ships still at sea are on cruises to nowhere](#) (Travel Weekly)
It's been five days since CLIA member lines declared a suspension of cruise operations due to the COVID-19 crisis, but several cruise ships are still at sea with passengers, and some are having trouble finding ports to disembark. ASTA CEO Zane Kerby criticized ports for turning away cruise ships.
- ▶ [Travel Advisors Scramble as Coronavirus Rattles Clients](#) (Skift)
In a statement to members, ASTA counseled against making recommendations to clients about whether or not to travel to affected areas. Instead, it said travel advisors should encourage clients to contact the Centers for Disease Control for the most up-to-date information.