



CHARTING A NEW FRONTIER: **AVIATION CONSUMER PROTECTION NEEDS TODAY AND BEYOND**

INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR

**US Aviation Consumer Protection
Response to Covid-19 Pandemic**

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U.S. Aviation Consumer Response Response to Covid-19

STAY-AT-HOME ORDERS

- States issued orders with exceptions for essential workers - DHS Guidance designates airline/airport workers as “essential”
- Nonessential or leisure travel technically not allowed under many orders
- Practical effect of grounding voluntary travel, with some discretionary travel allowed

CARES ACT

- US Airline revenues plunged in 2020 and remained low until only recently
- US airlines took on massive debt to survive
- US Executive Branch passed the CARES Act, which included Payroll Support Program (PSP) grants to cover labor costs
- Included conditions to support including minimum air service requirements

REFUNDS

- US DOT received a flood of refund-related consumer complaints
- DOT investigated individual carrier refund/change/cancellation policies and opened approximately 20 formal investigations
- DOT filed formal complaint against a carrier and issued civil penalties
- DOT is now engaged in a rulemaking effort to further clarify refund rules

MASKS

- After a year of inaction and the lack of a federal mandate, U.S. Federal Mask mandate issued almost a year later by US CDC
- DOT issued guidance on masks for passengers with disabilities

OTHER

Regulatory relief from agencies such as:

- FAA - Relief from airport slot use or lose requirements and guidance on mitigating risks
- DOT – Granting dormancy waiver for limited entry routes
- “Business as usual” orders with respect to enforcement, rulemakings and other FAA Reauthorization mandates.

