



# DATA TO SUPPORT THE SAFETY OF TRAVEL FOR PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**The data and science are clear: Attending professional business meetings and events (PMES) – including the transportation to get there and home – is incredibly safe. In fact, it is safer than some everyday activities such as going to the grocery store.**

## Science shows that flying is safe

- [Research from the Mayo Clinic](#) shows the risk of a person becoming infected with COVID-19 boarding a flight from the U.K. to the U.S. is 1 out of 10,000
- The [same research](#) shows that the risk of an infected passenger transmitting the virus to another passenger flying from the U.K. to the U.S. is even lower, at 1 out of 1 million passengers
- A Harvard study finds that through a layered approach to risk mitigation, the scientific evidence shows a low risk of SARS-COV-2 transmission on aircraft<sup>1</sup>
- The Aerospace and International Airline Medical Associations found that the **risk of contracting COVID-19 during air travel is lower than contracting the virus** while in an office building, classroom, grocery store or commuter train<sup>2</sup>
- Airplanes maintain clean air by circulating air through HEPA filters, the same type of air filters used in hospital operating rooms according to the research conducted by the Aerospace and International Airline Medical Associations<sup>3</sup>
- TSA recently extended the mask mandate on all forms of transportation through January 2022. The universal wearing of masks in airports, airplanes, trains and other forms of public transportation is both an effective safeguard against spreading the virus and boosts public confidence in traveling – both of which are paramount for a sustained economic recovery



COVID-19 vaccination rates among **American travelers who have traveled by air in the last two years is 79%** according to Destinations Analysts<sup>4</sup> vs. a 63% full vaccination rate of the U.S. population according to the CDC<sup>5</sup>.

## Professional meetings and events are conducted under controlled environments allowing for maximum health and safety

- According to Ohio State University, professional business meetings and events have the advantage of being structured and well-organized large gatherings put together by professional meeting planners and are held in controlled environments where mitigation factors can be enforced to protect the health and safety of participants<sup>6</sup>
  - Mitigation strategies include masks, physical distancing, disinfecting surfaces, proper ventilation and airflow, symptom screening and the high vaccination rates of attendees and organizers
- According to analysis by the Ohio State University, **PMES “have not been super-spreader events”**<sup>7</sup>
- In fact, according to scientific modeling by the Exhibitions and Conferences Alliance and Epistemix, in-person PMEs pose a near-zero (0.001%) risk of COVID-19 transmission to attendees—even for large events<sup>8</sup>

- And in light of the more contagious Delta variant, Epistemix modeling found risks of infection at events to be as much as **eight times less than within the local community** where the event was held and are no riskier than most normal daily activities<sup>9</sup>
- Epistemix modeling analysis also found that **events have NOT been shown to be a major driver of case counts** largely due to the fact that in-person events (exhibitors and attendees) have higher vaccination rates (~80%) than the overall population<sup>10</sup>
- Air quality of indoor events in many hotels and convention centers is extremely high. Most major convention centers and hotels have significantly upgraded their HVAC systems in the last year and voluminous event spaces are similar to outdoor transmissibility according to research conducted by Freeman<sup>11</sup>
- Thousands of event spaces, facilities, hotels, airports and airlines have undergone rigorous screening processes to ensure proper protocols and high standards of health and hygiene are in place
  - Examples: The Las Vegas Convention Center, Chicago's McCormick Place, Walter E. Washington Convention Center in D.C., Hyatt hotels, Orlando International Airport, Charlotte Douglas International Airport in Charlotte and American Airlines, just to name a few, have all achieved Global BioRisk Advisory Council (GBAC) Star Accreditation status to demonstrate their commitment to operating safely

## **Business travelers (and meeting planners) are more likely than the general population to be vaccinated**

- In general, business travelers are well educated and have higher incomes. **They are also significantly more likely to be vaccinated** – According to Destination Analysts, 78% of Americans who have traveled for business in the last two years have been vaccinated, compared to 72% of American travelers overall
- As of mid-July, nearly nine in 10 corporate travel buyers and suppliers were at least partly vaccinated according to a July Global Business Travel Association member poll<sup>12</sup>
- Meeting planners are also leading by example as nearly nine in 10 planners and suppliers are vaccinated as cited in PCMA's June COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard<sup>13</sup>

## **Large meetings are currently happening now...safely, yet no one is talking about them**

### **Continuing Education Company's Annual Women's Health Conference**

*September 14-16, 2021 • Around 250 attendees • Nashville, TN*

- Contactless registration, mask required if not vaccinated, deep sanitation treatments after events

### **Continuing Education Company's Annual Hospitalist Conference**

*September 13-16, 2021 • Around 150 attendees • Asheville, NC*

- Contactless registration, indoor mask requirement, deep sanitation treatments after events

### **Medical Design & Manufacturing (MD&M) West Trade Show**

*August 10-12, 2021 • Anaheim, CA • Around 17,000 attendees*

- Mask requirement, COVID testing requirement, increased medical staff, additional hand sanitation stations, contactless registration, increased convention center cleaning

### **Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Global Health Conference and Exhibition**

*August 9-13, 2021 • Las Vegas, NV • Around 14,000 attendees*

- Vaccination requirement, free COVID-19 testing and biometric screening, indoor mask requirement

### **2nd Annual Women's Health Conference**

*September 2020 • Asheville, NC*

- Outdoor setting, mask requirement, daily health screening/temperature tests

### **IPW 2021**

*September 18-22 • Las Vegas, NV*

- Proof of vaccination, negative COVID-19 test, mask requirement, daily health screening/temperature tests

## Business travelers (and meeting planners) want to get back on the road

- As of the latest Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) member poll, **willingness to travel for business is holding steady** with more than three-quarters (77%) willing to travel in the current environment<sup>14</sup>
- **Six in 10 GBTA respondents to the August member poll already allow non-essential domestic business travel**<sup>15</sup>
- 85% of American workers view in-person events as “irreplaceable,” according to Freeman research based on data from one million U.S. event attendees<sup>16</sup>
- A survey commissioned by APCO found that 81% who attended work-related PMEs pre-pandemic **miss doing so and are likely to attend events in the future**<sup>17</sup>
- Government policies that restrict or make travel difficult (55%), **followed by company policies restricting employees** (23%) and travel budgets (11%) are the top barriers to business travel according to a Global Business Travel Association member poll<sup>18</sup>

1. [Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health 10/27](#)

2. JAMA Network, '[Risk of COVID-19 During Air Travel](#)', Oct 1, 2020.

3. JAMA Network, '[Risk of COVID-19 During Air Travel](#)', Oct 1, 2020.

4. [DA](#), Aug 23rd

5. [CDC](#), Sept 13

6. [Ohio State University](#), Scientific-Based Evidence for Conducting Safe and Healthy PMEs

7. [Ohio State University](#), Scientific-Based Evidence for Conducting Safe and Healthy PMEs

8. [Ohio State University](#), Scientific-Based Evidence for Conducting Safe and Healthy PMEs

9. [Freeman and Epistemix](#), Aug 2021

10. [Freeman and Epistemix](#), Aug 2021

11. [Freeman and Epistemix](#), Aug 2021

12. [GBTA Member Poll](#), July 19th

13. PCMA [Business Events Recovery Dashboard](#), June 23, 2021

14. [GBTA Member Poll](#), August 26, 2021

15. [GBTA Member Poll](#), August 26, 2021

16. [Freeman, March 2, 2021](#)

17. [APCO Insights](#) Commissioned by MMB, March 2021

18. [GBTA May Member Poll, 5/20](#)