

Data to Support the Safety of Travel for Professional Meetings and Events

The data and science are clear: Attending business meetings, conferences and events—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.

The science says: Flying is safe

- [Research from the Mayo Clinic](#) shows that the risk of a person becoming infected with COVID-19 while 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
- 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
- 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
- Airplanes maintain clean air by circulating air through HEPA filters, the same type of air filters used in hospital operating rooms according to research conducted by the [Aerospace and International Airline Medical Associations](#)
- TSA recently extended the mask mandate on all forms of transportation through March 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

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
 - 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, **meetings, conferences and events “have not been super-spreader events”**
- In fact, according to scientific modeling by the Exhibitions and Conferences Alliance and Epistemix, in-person PME’s pose a near-zero (0.1%) risk of COVID-19 transmission to attendees—even for large events (Epistemix, February 2022)
- Even in light of the more contagious omicron variant, Epistemix modeling found risks of infection at events to be **as much as four times less** than the local community where the event was held and are no riskier than most normal daily activities
- 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 (~87%) than the overall population

- 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
- 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 more highly educated—nearly half (47%) have a graduate degree. They are also significantly more likely to be vaccinated – as of January, according to Destination Analysts, 87% of business travelers have been vaccinated, compared to 80% of American travelers overall
- Meeting planners are leading by example as nearly nine in 10 planners and suppliers are vaccinated, as cited in PCMA's June COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard

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

- Close to eight in 10 U.S. companies (79%) plan to conduct business travel in the next 90 days as of January – on par with October before the omicron variant hit
- Despite omicron, as of the latest Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) member poll, close to two-thirds (64%) of travel managers believe their employees are willing to travel in the current environment
- Three in four travel managers expect business travel volume to be higher in 2022 than it was in 2021
- [More than half \(54%\) of business travelers](#) miss traveling and hope to more often in the future
- As of January, more than six in 10 (62%) business travelers feel confident they could travel safely in the current environment (Destination Analysts, January 2022)
- 85% of American workers view in-person events as “irreplaceable,” according to Freeman research based on data from 1 million U.S. event attendees (Freeman, March 2, 2021)
- A [survey commissioned by APCO](#) found that 81% of those who attended work-related meetings, conferences and events prior to the pandemic **miss doing so and are likely to attend events in the future**
- Government policies that restrict or make travel difficult (43%), **followed by company policies restricting employees (24%)** are the top barriers to business travel according to a [Global Business Travel Association](#) member poll