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LEADER SHIP

The cruise industry has long acknowledged the cumulative negative impact of illness outbreaks. COVID-19 presents a frightful situation. From a public health perspective, though, we shift from Distress to Redress and Address. Leader-SHIP is the newsletter that interweaves media articles and cruise industry responses to provide guidance on actions being taken against the novel coronavirus. It negates forces of disruption and decline with measures for steadfastness ultimately having you enhance the practice of public health in your own life and of those around you.

PLEASE NOTE THIS ISN'T A COMPLETE LISTING OF MEDIA ARTICLES BUT A SNAPSHOT ONLY.

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23 May, 2020: Australia extends cruise ship ban for another three months

Australia has extended the ban on cruise ship operations for another three months amid the Covid-19 pandemic. In a statement, the Australian Border Force said that all cruise ships capable of carrying more than 100 passengers are prohibited from operating in Australian waters until 17 September. The decision comes after Australian Governor-General David Hurley announced the extension of the human biosecurity emergency period from 17 June to 17 September. It enabled the Ministry for Health to take necessary steps to prevent and control the spread of Covid-19.

The statement added: "On 20 May 2020, the Minister for Health extended the determination, under section 477(1) of the Biosecurity Act 2015 (Biosecurity Act), to prohibit the arrival at an Australian port of any international cruise ship that has left a foreign port. The restrictions included direct arrivals and round-trip cruises (RTC)." Source:

<https://www.ship-technology.com/news/australia-extends-cruise-ship-ban/>

23 May, 2020: Royal Caribbean Cancels Cruises Through July; Targeting August 1 Return

Citing ongoing global public health circumstances, Royal Caribbean Cruises issued a statement saying that it has decided to extend the suspension of *most sailings* through July 31, 2020, with the exception of sailings from China, which will be suspended through the end of June. "We are working with our guests and travel partners to address this disruption to their vacations, and we are genuinely sorry for their inconvenience," the company said. "We expect to return to service on August 1." Source:

<https://www.cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/22978-royal-caribbean-cancels-cruises-through-july-targeting-august-1-return.html>

23 May, 2020: Differences Between Major Cruise Lines – Which Is Best for You?

There are dozens of cruise lines based all over the world, and more than 25 million passengers set sail every year on a wide variety of itineraries to hundreds of different ports of call. But just as different ports all have their own unique histories and cultures, cruise lines also have distinct personalities. By understanding the differences between major cruise lines, you can choose the line that best suits your travel preferences, personal style, and vacation dreams for the perfect oceangoing getaway. Find out the differences between the major cruise lines to help decide which one is the best for you for that dream cruise vacation. *Continue Reading...*

<https://www.cruisehive.com/differences-between-major-cruise-lines-which-is-best-for-you/39637>



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23 May, 2020: Virgin Pushes Start Date for Cruises to October 16

Virgin Voyages has extended its delayed launch and will now start revenue service in October, as opposed to August, according to a memo sent to travel partners. "We've been working hard to find a way to set sail by August, but that hasn't turned out to be possible," the company said. "We appreciate how many of your Sailors were excited to sail with us, so we understand how disappointing this news is. But we trust you and your Sailors will understand our decision given the evolving global health challenge we're all up against. "As of right now, our first sailing is planned for October 16th, 2020, and we've rescheduled the Richard's Birthday Bash sailing for July 14th, 2021. This sailing will still be a once in a lifetime experience for us to have fun, while also continuing our tradition of doing business for good." *Source:*

<https://www.cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/22979-virgin-pushes-start-date-for-cruises-to-october-16.html>

23 May, 2020: Royal Caribbean: Healthy Return to Service

Royal Caribbean Cruises expects to return its brands to service in phases and in what the company calls a Healthy Return to Service Program with special emphasis on safety, security and health. On the company's earnings call, Chairman and CEO Richard Fain said the company is working to develop a four-step program starting with upgraded screening of passengers before they come aboard; enhanced processes and procedures aboard; special focus on destinations being in compliance; and procedures for dealing with exceptions.

Fain said the company has assembled a team of experts and will only start operating when it is absolutely ready to do so. It also needs to regain the confidence of consumers by being very transparent in its actions and communicating extensively. Comparing the COVID-19 impact on travel to 9/11, Fain said that while travel rebounded after 9/11 it was different and that traditional travel did not revert to what it had been like before, but adjusted to a new normal and grew in a different environment. *Continue Reading...*

<https://www.cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/22977-royal-caribbean-healthy-return-to-service.html>

23 May, 2020: Here's When You Might Be Able to Take A Cruise Again

The reeling cruise ship industry has taken one of the hardest economic hits from the restrictions on travel to battle the coronavirus pandemic, but with lockdowns starting to lift, several of the largest brands are planning to put ships back on the seas as early as this summer. Cruise ships at U.S. ports are currently



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under a “no sail order” which was originally enacted by the CDC on March 14 as the coronavirus began its rapid spread across the country. Cruise ships were some of the earliest clusters for coronavirus transmission outside of China. Perhaps the most notable example is the Grand Princess, which spent several days off the coast of California in early March before it was finally allowed to dock in Oakland.

The cruise industry has taken a tremendous hit since coronavirus began to spread, with shares of cruise lines falling over 80%. Americans seem eager to get back on the waters, though, if recently released data from a Florida-based travel booking agency are any indication. On May 4 — the day Carnival made the announcement it’d be resuming service — the Cruise Planners travel service reported Carnival bookings were up 600% compared to the same date in 2019. *Continue Reading...*

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicholasreimann/2020/05/15/heres-when-you-might-be-able-to-take-a-cruise-again/#4bfa9f2d1cb2>

23 May, 2020: Long Island couple sues cruise line over coronavirus exposure

A Long Island couple is suing a cruise line after they say it negligently exposed them to the coronavirus during the early days of the outbreak. The couple says the cruise line was aware that someone on the boat was displaying symptoms of COVID-19, but they claim the company did not alter the boat’s schedule or activities. They also claim the boat held large gatherings of passengers, further exposing everyone to infection. Fred and Marlene Kantrow boarded the Celebrity Eclipse on Feb. 29, ABC News reported. After they returned home on March 30, Fred Kantrow was reportedly hospitalized after being infected with COVID-19. They say Celebrity did not inform them of any positive cases of the virus until one or two days after they disembarked.

In the lawsuit, the couple alleges that the cruise line was aware that someone on the boat was showing symptoms of the disease at the beginning of the voyage. The couple claims the boat continued with its normally scheduled entertainment and activity options and continued to serve buffet-style meals anyway. After news of the pandemic broke, the ship’s management reportedly held a large gathering of passengers and crew members to honor health care workers. The Kantrows described the event, saying that everybody on the ship was “right next to each other.” *Continue Reading....*

<https://www.foxnews.com/travel/long-island-couple-sues-celebrity-cruise-coronavirus>



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23 May, 2020: 'Hygiene is the new luxury': How cruise ship design could evolve to ward against outbreaks

The world is acutely aware of the risks of boarding a cruise ship after coronavirus ran rampant on ships for the first few months of 2020, infecting hundreds and forcing passengers into quarantine – sometimes for weeks at a time, both while on board and after disembarkation. With the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's no-sail order set to expire in late July, cruise lines are starting to consult design experts to ensure passenger safety and minimize risk of infection from coronavirus and other viral outbreaks in the future. "Nothing will be more critical to resuming sustained and profitable long term operations than making cruising the safest option in (the) travel and leisure space and providing cruisers with peace of mind," Frank Del Rio, CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd., said on an earnings call Thursday. "Ships are currently formulating similar plans to address outbreaks of COVID-19, and these plans could also be modified to prevent and respond to other communicable illnesses in the future," Aimee Treffiletti, chief of the CDC's Vessel Sanitation Program, told USA TODAY last month.

Most cruise lines haven't revealed concrete plans yet but suggested changes may include revamping dining rooms and other highly trafficked areas to promote social distancing. However, AMK Architecture & Design, a Greek firm that specializes in hotel and cruise ship interiors and has worked on more than 120 marine-based projects for lines such as Celebrity and Costa, is already working on future strategies "The core of the hospitality business – no matter where it is, is essentially the same, and that is to provide guests with the ultimate experience during their stay," Anna Koustoukosta, AMK's principal architect and managing partner, told USA TODAY. "The cruise industry, however, which is a floating hotel, is a much more difficult and complex application."

Now another degree of difficulty has been added to the challenge of designing a cruise ship: How do you stop the spread of COVID-19 or other highly contagious viruses in the future? And how do you continue to offer passengers the convenience of a large cruise ship while prioritizing safety? "Necessity is the mother of invention, and in this period, we need to reinvent how the passenger moves in the ship and interacts with the ship," said Koustoukosta.

Why are cruise ships so high-risk?

Cruise ships squeeze hundreds or thousands of guests into a relatively small space, and megaships play a prominent role in the industry. Royal Caribbean's 1,188-foot Symphony of the Seas, for instance, can



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accommodate nearly 9,000 passengers and crew. "Like other close-contact environments, ships may facilitate the transmission of respiratory viruses from person to person through exposure to respiratory droplets or contact with contaminated surfaces," Treffiletti said. Cruises, which have a the-more-the-merrier philosophy, are never a solitary affair. The fun centers around myriad group activities in a nonstop party atmosphere. Sipping cocktails around the pool, filling showrooms for Las Vegas-style revues, dancing, playing games or lining up at the buffet table all offer viruses opportunities to spread.

But ships are facing a potential new reality in which cruise lines' business model will change: The number of passengers could be restricted – either by the CDC or cruise lines – to ensure physical distancing. If that change happens, the lines will need to look at new ways to generate revenue in addition to creating an environment in which they are ready for onboard emergencies such as a viral outbreak.

What kind of changes are needed?

"The aim is to suggest solutions to reduce the need for touch interaction, make surfaces and frequently-touched points virus resistant and shape the layout of areas of the ship so as to enable safe and at-distant flow of passengers and crew, without sacrificing socializing, which is one of the important ingredients of the cruise," said Koustoukosta. Dustin Schafer, director of engineers and senior vice president at Henderson Engineering, who is working on strategies to stop viruses in buildings, said similar ideas would apply to cruise ships, where space is at a premium and social distancing is harder. "Air and surface cleaning become even more critical," he told USA TODAY. "As a first-line strategy, I would recommend retrofits to remove required touch points throughout the ships."

Embarkation and disembarkation areas

The first crowded public area most cruisers encounter is the embarkation area, where passengers check in and present travel documents before boarding their ship. AMK suggests making the following changes to make these areas less of a petri dish:

- A "sanitization gate" at the embarkation/disembarkation area of the ship to ensure hygiene protocols are followed
- Technology to limit or rid cruise ships of check-in lines
- Anti-microbial carpets for public areas and cabin corridors
- Automatic doors for entrance and exit points to avoid unnecessary touching



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Passenger cabins

Koutsoukosta expects that luxury cabins and suites will become first preference for passengers since those rooms provide access to fresh air. Koutsoukosta suggests creating an enclosed space akin to a mudroom just outside the cabin where passengers could place clothing and shoes worn prior to entering their cabin. Crew could also leave food and linens in the event of a quarantine. Inside the cabin itself, antimicrobial carpets and fabric could be installed and bathrooms could be modified for touch-free operation; shower curtains could be replaced with glass dividers.

Crew cabins

Koutsoukosta and her team haven't forgotten the crew members, who remain on board after passengers have disembarked. And due to the pandemic and complicated rules for repatriating workers to their home countries, there are still employees marooned on ships today waiting to be let off. "With the well-being and safety of the crew in mind, cabins for the crew members can change in capacity or size so as to allow adequate self-distancing for the living quarters," Koutsoukosta said.

"In the cruise industry the number of passengers is closely tied to the number of crew members," said Koutsoukosta. "Now, with the assumption that ships will be sailing with a reduced number of passengers, this will mean that the number of service personnel will be also reduced, as they will have to cater for less people." Because of that potential reduction, she imagines that crew cabins that hosted four individuals could be repurposed for two individuals and some cabins could be left unoccupied to be used in case of an emergency.

Dining areas

Dining on ships will likely change, as well. Koutsoukosta said that table sizing and spacing could be altered to ensure safe distancing between passengers and still provide enough room for staff to move about. Dividers could even be used to create separation at times if needed, she added. The style of dining on board could change, too, including the popular buffet option. Some cruise line officials say that buffets could disappear entirely. Frank Del Rio, CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line, told USA TODAY in an interview that the buffet – a cruise ship mainstay – would probably not be offered anymore.

But Koutsoukosta doesn't necessarily believe buffets need to be eliminated entirely. "The buffets layout can also change, with more counters as a solution to avoid long queues or even offering table service," she



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said. Royal Caribbean president and CEO Michael Bayley indicated he thinks buffets can adapt, too. "We've got teams working on every single element of the guest experience and we obviously have a team working on the buffet," he said during a Royal Caribbean "coffee chat" reported on by CruiseRadio.net.

Theaters

AMK told Cruise Industry News that theaters could be moved outdoors, to start. "New open-air show theaters and disco areas, with weather-protection options, can give passengers indoor comfort and outdoor relaxation and security," Koutsoukosta explained to USA TODAY.

Schafer, the engineer, suggested that cruise lines "utilize portable UVc lights or potentially fogging systems to sanitize high-occupancy spaces such as dining and entertainment areas." (Electrostatic sprayers have also been used to disinfect the Diamond Princess and commercial airline cabins.)

Swimming pools

While pools themselves will remain intact, surrounding areas can be reimagined, according to Koutsoukosta. "To better understand how we can improve the surrounding areas, we must observe how the pools are used and for what function," she said. In that vein, many passengers use the pool areas to tan and go into the pool only to cool themselves, she explained. An updated pool area design could include showers and other water features to provide alternatives and mitigate pool crowding. "In addition to that, there are thoughts for passengers to book their slots in the pools, which will give them the added comfort of spaciousness," she said. And cabanas could replace sun beds or deck chairs to promote social distancing on pool decks. She also mentioned that they are evaluating the use of hot tubs.

Medical facilities

Onboard medical facilities also need to be upgraded as ships prepare to relaunch after coronavirus. In fact, Koutsoukosta said she believes they could become a "differentiator" as cruise lines compete to woo back customers. It's likely, she said, that there will be increased space for medical facilities and cabins for medical crew that are separate from the rest of the crew. "All medical-related facilities can be interlinked, and (at) the same time, isolated from the rest of the ship so as to separate medical operations from the public areas of the ship," Koutsoukosta said.

By having medical facilities separated from the rest of the ship, security and safety for doctors, nurses and patients alike would be increased, she explained. All health emergencies could be dealt with securely in



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one part of the ship while the fun could remain intact on the rest of the ship. How soon could these changes be implemented? Koutsoukosta couldn't provide a timeline for when these safety upgrades might start appearing on cruise ships. She said AMK is currently consulting with one client and in talks with another, neither of which the company is able to identify.

"Anytime from a few weeks to a few months based on the extent to which of the vessels will be modified," she estimated. "Again, after the feasibility studies, it's a matter of decision by the cruise lines. Everybody right now is more or less testing the waters." Del Rio echoed Koutsoukosta's sentiment, predicting that the relaunching cruise ships, including Norwegian's own fleet of 28 ships, will involve trial and error. "There will be fits and starts, and it will require the implementation of new protocols as we learn what works," he said.

Could changes be applied to ships already in service or only new vessels?

Koutsoukosta said it will be easier to implement complex changes to ships that are still on the drawing board or in preliminary stages of construction. It's a little trickier to alter existing ships. "There is really a certain limitation to the extent to which one can modify them quickly and in an economically viable way," she explained. "What we try to do with our clients is focus on the vital-few solutions." Competition in the cruise industry has always been intense, Koutsoukosta added, and it will remain that way after coronavirus. And while sanitation upgrades aren't as grabby as onboard roller coasters or private islands, they will be necessary to compete. "The changes that the cruise lines will make to their ships does not only improve their product offering, but it also puts them ahead of their competitors, as physical distancing, and hygiene is the new luxury," she said. *Source:*

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/cruises/2020/05/19/coronavirus-how-cruise-ship-design-may-change-prevent-outbreaks/3065160001/>



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