



Time to customize your travel program

The world is re-opening and companies must prepare for more risks, greater demands and increased time and effort in business travel.

By Kristine Seest

Countries and regions are slowly reopening their societies making it possible for Danish employees to go on business trips to meet clients, suppliers, and partners. However, a return to life as before the corona crisis still seems a distant dream, and therefore companies must be prepared to spend more time and effort on sending employees on business trips.

Travel planning and safety systems, guidelines and procedures need to be re-evaluated and adjusted, and this can be complicated and time consuming. Work should be started well in advance of any journeys so that the employees are prepared for the new conditions and can travel safely.

»The world has changed since covid-19. Employees traveling from Denmark have been used to fairly open borders, common standards and similar rules and conditions. But that is not the case anymore – and won't be for the foreseeable future. Countries have made their own rules of entry and infection control and companies must familiarize themselves with these rules to ensure employees a safe and well-prepared journey. A change of mentality is needed as free mobility and common standards cannot be taken for granted anymore. Danes are not welcome in some places and entry into Denmark for international employees also entails restrictions,« says Travel Risk Management Specialist Sander Pedersen from Willis Towers Watson.



Companies will have to consider various scenarios related to covid-19 – such as restrictions in local medical care, quarantines, detention and of course risk of infection. It can be quite strenuous to have an employee caught in an emergency situation and require a lot of resources to bring him or her home, and therefore companies must do what they can to prevent the situation from occurring and have a contingency plan ready when it does.

Holistic business travel risk management ensures a more proactive and efficient handling of possible incidents and provides better conditions for the employees to fulfil their tasks.

Competitive advantage

The long-awaited re-opening also brings with it a certain strategic element of competition. Crises can lead to great business potential and for some companies it can be a competitive advantage that their employees are ready and able to travel sooner and smoother than their competitors. For all companies, however, it is important to provide safe and secure travel, and to live up to responsibilities as an employer.

»It has become even more important for companies to know the local restrictions, varying rules and conditions in relation to transit, quarantine requirements and test facilities – and they must make continuous efforts to stay on top of the situation, because conditions are changing rapidly. The EU, for example, is expected to introduce the Digital Green Certificate, as a precondition for entry into certain countries,« says Sander Pedersen.

Willis Towers Watson offers advice on travel risk management and can help to identify the key areas that companies need to be in control of when employees go on business trips. The goal is to ensure that assignments can be completed and strategic opportunities explored under good and safe conditions.

In addition to current travel risk management activities, a company may consider the following when making adjustments to the reopening.

Match the employees' expectations

Employees have different perceptions of risk and different appetites for it. It is important to align expectations with the employees, so that the employee feels safe when travelling. This is also a relief for relatives, and that will allow the employee to focus on the task at hand.

Step up the preparations

The many new rules of the game and risks in the world, create the need for even more research and preparation. A supplier is usually, in full or in part, part of this.

Prepare the employee

As an employer, you are sending the traveling employee – more or less on his or her own – to the front line. Therefore, the employee must be well-prepared for the trip through courses, briefings, instructions etc.

Get an overview of the insurance coverage

The relevant insurances should be reviewed in relation to the situation – in particular the lack of coverage – and linked to actual risks, preventive measures and the company's contingency plans.

Various considerations

- How do we deal with employees who are wary about traveling?
- How do we handle employees who will not or cannot be vaccinated and therefore may not be allowed to travel?
- How do we handle employees who are detained by local authorities – i.e. due to a shutdown?
- How is our business model affected by longer journeys and higher costs in the form of i.e. extra preventive measures and quarantines?

The Danish authorities offer more information:

- [The Ministry for Foreign Affairs](#) offers instructions on travel and accommodation
- coronasmitte.dk offers information on covid-19

Please be advised that rules for travel are changing rapidly and the contents of this article may become outdated after the date of publication.