

CRUISE

Latest CDC guidance does little to hasten cruising's return

By Johanna Jainchill   | Apr 02, 2021



Cruise ships docked at the Port of Miami at the outset of the pandemic. The CDC gave no further guidance Friday on when "trial sailings" might be permitted to commence.

The CDC today recommended that all port personnel, passengers and crew have a Covid-19 vaccine once it is available to them but did little to move the industry closer to a restart date by furthering the phases of the Conditional Sailing Order (CSO).

The cruise industry has been waiting since December for the updated technical guidance and for its ships to be able to begin "trial sailings" with volunteer passengers to test the efficacy of their Covid-19 protocols, the second phase of the CDC's order. Guidelines issued today don't give the industry much to work with in terms of getting closer to that goal. Instead, it provides further guidance on what agreements it must make with ports and health authorities to deal with a Covid outbreak should one occur during a cruise.

The CDC did add new guidance around crew testing and developing plans to incorporate vaccination strategies.

"Covid-19 vaccination efforts will be critical in the safe resumption of passenger operations," the CDC said in a statement. "As more people are fully vaccinated, the phased approach allows CDC to incorporate these advancements into planning for resumption of cruise ship travel when it is safe to do so."

The CDC also said in today's statement that although "cruising safely and responsibly during a global pandemic is difficult" and "will always pose some risk of Covid-19 transmission, following the phases of the CSO will ensure cruise ship passenger operations are conducted in a way that protects crew members, passengers and port personnel, particularly with emerging Covid-19 variants of concern."

Industry insiders expressed disappointment that the guidance did not do much to further the industry along a path to resumption and left the timeline for a restart uncertain, especially given a recent statement from the mayor of Miami-Dade County that after meeting with CDC officials she was "very encouraged" that the agency would be issuing "new guidelines for a safe restart to cruising."

A rising crescendo of prominent voices from both the travel industry at large and Congress have been calling for the CDC to either rescind the CSO or modify it to enable a faster path to cruise resumption.

One industry insider said the guidance today was "more of the same."

"Just today CDC announced vaccinated Americans could safely travel internationally," said Capt. John Murray, Port Canaveral CEO, according to Cruise Industry News. "We're disappointed that this guidance for the cruise industry appears to be nothing more than an incremental step in a far-reaching process to resume passenger sailings in the U.S. with no definitive or target start date."

From Our Partners

[https://www.travelweekly.com/Cruise-Travel/Latest-CDC-guidance-does-little-to-hasten-cruisings-return?](https://www.travelweekly.com/Cruise-Travel/Latest-CDC-guidance-does-little-to-hasten-cruisings-return?utm_source=eNewsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=eltrdb&oly_enc_id=7076C6173145D2R)

utm_source=eNewsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=eltrdb&oly_enc_id=7076C6173145D2R