

Debrief

AFA Debrief August 6, 2021

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United Announces Company Wide COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement

This morning United announced that as of September 20, 2021, all United employees will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. With this announcement, United joins other companies to mandate the vaccine, including: Disney, Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Uber among others.

As we've seen recently with the rise in COVID-19 infections due to the Delta variant, the pandemic is far from over. There also growing concerns among the medical community that other more dangerous variants are emerging as the virus continues to spread and mutate mostly through unvaccinated people who are vulnerable to infection.

The announcement today shouldn't be a big surprise to United employees, CEO Scott Kirby has been saying for months that [he's in favor of mandating the vaccine](#). Our union worked hard to promote access and negotiate incentives - [Vaccine Letter of Agreement](#). We were successful on both fronts. The recently announced and updated country restrictions requiring vaccination and rise in COVID have all been indicators that management would eventually come to this decision to mandate the vaccine for employees.

Vaccination requirements are not new to any Flight Attendant who has children, or even to our industry. Today, some destinations require vaccines in order to work trips. 80% of United Flight Attendants are already vaccinated against COVID-19.

One of the evolving pieces on this issue is the expected full approval of the vaccine by the Food and Drug Administration this fall, addressing some individuals concerns about the vaccine safety. There has also been guidance from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that employers are legally permitted to make employees get vaccinated, with very few exceptions on an individual basis.

This pandemic has forced our industry to dramatically adapt to an ever-evolving set of circumstances. With all that we have been through since the beginning of the pandemic, all that we have fought for and won, there is now too much at risk to not ensure the safety and well-being of United Flight Attendants. COVID-19 is a threat. There are proven strategies to mitigate that threat. Vaccination is necessary to end the pandemic and the health and economic harm it has caused.

Experts agree, vaccination is our best defense against COVID-19 and the extension of harm. We've seen a notable uptick of test positives over the last two weeks, majority of which are unvaccinated Flight Attendants though some breakthrough infections have been recorded. Now is not the time to let our guard down. The safest thing for us to do is continue our layered approach to this pandemic: getting vaccinated and wearing a mask! It's our best defense for our own health, the health of our flying partners, our families, and the economic stability of our jobs and industry.

We encourage you to read the company's communication, including any [FAQ's](#) and [Updates](#) to remain informed.

P.S. Still need to get vaccinated? Go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a location near you, then call or visit their website to make an appointment and get vaxxed!

Loss of a Leader: AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka

On Thursday August 5, 2021, we received word that AFL-CIO President and labor leader Richard Trumka passed away.

In a release from [AFL-CIO](#), "The labor movement, the AFL-CIO and the nation lost a legend today. Rich Trumka devoted his life to working people,

from his early days as president of the United Mine Workers of America to his unparalleled leadership as the voice of America's labor movement. He was a relentless champion of workers' rights, workplace safety, worker-centered trade, democracy and so much more. He was also a devoted father, grandfather, husband, brother, coach, colleague and friend. Rich was loved and beloved. Today, the 56 unions and 12.5 million members of the AFL-CIO mourn the passing of our fearless leader and commit to honoring his legacy with action. Standing on Rich's shoulders, we will pour everything we have into building an economy, society and democracy that lifts up every working family and community."

Today, we have lost a Brother. His work to grow and support the labor movement of countless industries cannot begin to be measured. His success and memory will be cemented in history as one of labor's greatest leaders and supporters. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends as we mourn the loss of this great man.

We will continue the mission he left behind in honoring his legacy.

Flight 93 Memorial Remembrance

This September marks the twentieth year since the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington D.C. In the wake of devastation after the attacks we made a promise to Never Forget our sisters and brothers lost on that fateful day. It is a promise we have kept every year.

For the twentieth remembrance, we will be attending the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville PA.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the high attendance rates predicted for this memorial, AFA will coordinate attendance to ensure our full participation. As we assess interest in attending and to accommodate as many participants as possible, we ask that you contact your Local Council by Monday August 9, no later than 12pm EST to express interest if you wish to attend.

In coordination with your Local Council, we are collecting information on the number of Members interested in attending to determine the final number we will be able to accommodate.

Recognizing space is limited at the National Memorial, Monday has been set for an initial head count only. We want to ensure we do everything we can to include as many people as are prepared to make the commitment to attend. Once our initial list of individuals is in place, additional opportunities to attend may be offered based on remaining availability.

Again, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the predicted attendance volumes due to this being the 20th remembrance, security and space is tighter than in past years.

Further details about bus pick up, hotel accommodations and the daily schedule will be released to participating Members once the attendance list is finalized. Remember to bid around September 10/11 to avoid scheduling conflicts. Trips will not be dropped to facilitate attendance.

You can read more about the [Flight 93 Memorial Attendance Announcement](http://www.unitedafa.org) at www.unitedafa.org.

Keeping the Skies Safe

Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic Flight Attendants have been on the frontlines of aviation. We have done our part to safely keep the travel industry going including working flights that have delivered the lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine across the country. In spite of the inherent dangers, Flight Attendants continue to perform their duties as aviation's first responders.

We are now facing a new danger when we come to work. We are seeing a rise in passenger to passenger and passenger to crew incidents. According to a recent [survey](#), conducted by AFA-CWA, 85 percent of Flight Attendants dealt with unruly passengers and nearly 1 in 5 experienced physical incidents in 2021.

Let us make this clear, it is NEVER acceptable for a Flight Attendant to be verbally or physically assaulted. We cannot allow this trend of unacceptable incidents to become common place. It appears every time we turn on the news, we hear about another horrific incident of a passenger attacking a working crew member, or a fight between passengers breaking out on an aircraft.

There is no excuse for the “bad behavior” we are seeing. It is a direct violation of federal law to interfere with working crew, and we need to see action taken against those that would put Flight Attendants and the traveling public at risk.

We need your support in continuing to pressure Washington, the FAA and the Department of Transportation to act. The safety of our skies is our number one priority. But we cannot complete our job safely without the support of the Federal Government and the airlines for which we work behind us. For our safety and that of passengers and in the interest of our airlines, the “zero-tolerance” policy must be made permanent.

In addition to our other responsibilities, it falls on us to record and report every instance of disruptive and violent passenger behavior that impacts the safety of our aircrafts. The reports we generate provide necessary evidence to strengthen current laws and open the door for new legislation to be penned in our favor. We recognize this is yet just another something we must do but we need to remind ourselves of the vital nature for this reporting. It is the necessary foundation for the safety structure we seek to put in place.

When filing a safety related report remember to **copy AFA** to ensure our Safety, Health and Security Committee Members, locally and at the MEC level, can track incidents in supporting each of us.

Update: Submitting Holding Pay Requests

The company announced this week that they will be implementing changes to the way holding pay requests are processed starting August 4, 2021.

In the past, these requests were processed manually by Crew Pay and in order to help expedite the process through automation, the company is changing the forms used to submit for holding pay.

Some changes to the pre-designated form of the “Request Holding Pay” from the Help Hub include using military time of “HH:MM” for input of Hour and Minutes, and the correct “Reason” selected for this automation to work.

The company listed the following descriptions of each of the “Reason” codes:

- *Cancellation – If your flight was cancelled after departure time and holding with passengers occurred on the aircraft. Times should be included in the Before Departure Holding section ONLY.*
- *Delays – If your flight was delayed due to mechanical/weather/late boarding of passengers etc. Times to be included in the Before Departure Holding section.*
- *Diversion – If your flight has made an intermediate, unscheduled stop. Times should be included in the After Departure Holding section ONLY.*
- *Gate return – Same as a return to blocks, if your flight departed and returned to the gate at the same airport. Times should be included in the Before Departure Holding section ONLY.*
- *Late deplaning – If your flight has blocked in and you are required to remain on board with passengers, etc. Times should be included in the After Departure Holding section ONLY.*

For more information on how to submit Holding Pay, please visit the Help Hub Knowledge Article entitled [Crew Pay Holding Pay Info & FAQs](#). For your convenience, please [click here to Request Holding Pay](#).

