

# TRAVELING CYCLONES

## GUIDELINES REGARDING THE COVID-19 VIRUS



The ISU Alumni Association and the Traveling Cyclones program are dedicated to providing educational and enriching travel opportunities for Iowa State alumni and friends. Unfortunately, the recent outbreak of COVID-19 presents travel challenges that can cause stress and frustration as news changes daily and questions remain unanswered. This is why our tour operators and the ISUAA have been closely monitoring the situation, regardless of destination.

Below are answers to frequently asked questions we have been receiving. In addition, we urge you to obtain further information about COVID-19 from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, the **World Health Organization**, and the **U.S. State Department**. For current university information, check the **Coronavirus Disease COVID-19 page**, which includes leadership statements, frequently asked questions, and links to many Iowa State University resources.

We hope that these resources will provide further insight into future travel.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Whose decision is it to cancel a trip?

The ISU Alumni Association is not the tour operator. The association serves only as the sponsor of the travel program for its alumni and their families and friends. We have long-standing relationships with our tour operators, and they value our input; however, it is ultimately the tour operator's decision whether to cancel a trip. The tour operators use several sources to help guide their decisions:

- Travel advisory ratings established by the **U.S. State Department**
- Information from the **World Health Organization**
- Information from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
- Information from ground operators in-country

#### What are my options if I booked a Traveling Cyclones program trip?

Concerns about travel to any destination at this time are understandable. Based on these concerns, we asked our tour operators to consider implementing policies that would help protect travelers' investments. Each operator has developed its own policies and should be contacted for specifics related to your trip.

If you have paid for your trip in full, you will now incur fees if you cancel. Should your trip still operate, options can be limited. Depending on the destination, some of our tour operators are offering travelers an opportunity to delay travel or choose another destination without incurring any penalties. Please contact the tour operator directly for any available options. This is consistent with alternatives being offered across the travel industry.

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### Can I expect a full refund?

Should a tour operator cancel a trip, you can expect either a full refund or incentives for moving to a future trip. Each operator is handling this on a case-by-case basis. If a trip runs, normal cancellation policies and fees will apply and the options noted above may be offered.

### Why are some operators only offering vouchers for future travel rather than refunds?

In some cases, cruise lines are offering more lenient policies than land operators for travelers rebooking a trip, often allowing travel through 2022. Here's why:

- Cruise lines own their ships, employ the onboard staff, manage the food service chain, manage the amenities onboard the ship (e.g., restaurants, health and wellness facilities), and otherwise oversee the entire ship operation. As a result, they have fewer vendors and services that require payment before a trip departs. They can hold your money for an extended period of time and allow you to defer travel, in most cases until 2022.
- Land operators, on the other hand, have in-country vendors that require payment several months before your trip takes place. Ground operators, hotels, bus services, meals, tour directors, entry fees, and other services require payment in advance. In addition, some ground operators are placing restrictions on the length of time you may take to rebook your trip to help manage resources and the influx of changes taking place. The reduced time frame might not align with your desired time frame, but options are limited to help protect your investment.

### If I decide to cancel, am I covered by travel insurance?

In short, standard travel insurance does not cover cancellations due to concerns about Coronavirus before the trip takes place. Benefits apply only if you fall ill on a trip or are quarantined while on a trip. If your policy includes "cancel for any reason," then you may be eligible for a refund. In most cases, a policy can be transferred to a new tour date if you rebook or defer to a future trip. For anyone who has a policy with our preferred partner **USI Travel Insure Select** you may contact them directly at (800) 937-1387.

### Who will notify me or update me on this situation?

The tour operator will contact you directly with any updates regarding your trip. However, should you have questions related to your tour, contact the tour operator directly. See their phone numbers below. You may also contact Shellie Andersen, Vice President for Business Development & Constituent Engagement, at [shelliea@iastate.edu](mailto:shelliea@iastate.edu) or by calling (515) 294-9310.



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### When will I know if my trip is canceled?

There is no specific timeline. However, communications have been taking place approximately 6-8 weeks before the trip departs. Should a change in travel advisory status occur, the tour operator will contact you as soon as the change is known.

### Whom should I contact if I have questions?

You should contact the tour operator at one of the following numbers:

- AHI: (800) 680-4244
- Gohagan & Co.: (800) 922-3088
- Go Next: (888) 664-0144
- Odysseys Unlimited: (888) 370-6765
- Orbridge: (866) 639-0079
- Premier World Discovery: (877) 953-8687
- USI Travel Insure Select: (800) 937-1387

Or you may also contact:

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