



Aviation News Today

Top Stories for Wednesday, April 1, 2020

DOT Outlines Air Service Requirements for Coronavirus Aid



The Department of Transportation yesterday issued an “order to show cause” that outlines air service requirements for airlines receiving financial assistance under the recently enacted third coronavirus relief package. The order proposes that airlines maintain minimum air services on a nationwide basis, offers some exceptions, and allows carriers to request exemptions.

“The Department recognizes that demand for air travel has significantly declined as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and that requiring covered carriers to operate their full schedules and networks as they did before the public health emergency would be counterproductive to the objectives set forth in the CARES Act,” DOT said in the 176-page order.

The DOT order indicates that service obligations apply only to destinations in the United States. DOT also determined that in cases where an air carrier serves multiple airports in the same community, “carriers would not need to maintain service to all such airports, but would be able to consolidate operations at a single airport serving the point.”

DOT is “requiring only minimum service level for each point served,” according to the order. The order also suggests that it may not be practicable for carriers “to serve all points previously served in the prevailing operating environment.” Therefore, the order allows airlines to request an exemption from the service obligation for destinations “not reasonable or practicable to serve.”

DOT said it will initially enforce the service obligation on carriers accepting financial assistance through Sept. 30, 2020, but could extend that date. There is additional information on our [Coronavirus Updates](#) website available to AAEE members.

Quick Hits

- President Trump tweeted yesterday that a \$2 trillion infrastructure package should be part of the next legislative response to the coronavirus pandemic. ([Washington Post](#))
- Passenger levels at TSA screening checkpoints continue to fall. TSA screened 154,080 travelers on Monday, down from 2.36 million last year. ([See the latest TSA throughput numbers](#))
- FAA, in a notice scheduled for publication in today's Federal Register, said it is allowing pilots and flight engineers to fly with an expired medical certificate through June 30. An FAA medical exam is a "nonemergency medical service" and exams "increase the risk of transmission of the virus," FAA said. ([Federal Register](#))
- The Treasury Department has unveiled preliminary guidance for airlines and contractors seeking grants and loans provided by the coronavirus relief package. ([Treasury press release](#))