

REFUNDS AND CREDITS

INFORMATION FOR CRUISE CUSTOMERS

The suspension of cruise operations worldwide has been an essential response to COVID-19, but it has also created unprecedented difficulties for millions of travellers and enormous operational challenges for those who work in the cruise industry.

Cruise lines and our CLIA travel agent partners are now experiencing extraordinary volumes of enquiries from customers whose travel plans must be changed or cancelled. We understand how frustrating this can be, particularly for those waiting to receive a refund or other alternative arrangements. We are conscious of the fact you may encounter delays and inconvenience, and we thank you for your patience and understanding.

How Has COVID-19 impacted Cruise Lines and their CLIA Member Travel Agent partners?

Fast Fact

Around 32 million passengers were forecast to cruise globally in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic and suspension of sailing directly impacts millions of these bookings.



As a result of COVID-19, many tourism operators have had to increase their refund capacity in a very short time. In some cases, this increase has involved taking refund capacity from 35,000 bookings a month to 150,000 - that's a 328% increase.

Why is my refund taking so long?

Delays in processing refunds are not unique to the cruise industry and are a result of the complex nature of travel bookings, often across multiple suppliers in different countries. Some bookings are made directly with a cruise line and other providers like hotels, airlines, and tour operators. In some cases, travel agents may book through a wholesaler, which can add another step to the refund process. In some circumstances, even prior to COVID-19, a refund on a planned holiday can take anywhere up to 12 weeks to process.

When you combine the complexity of these processes with an unprecedented number of refund requests, the result is a difficult backlog.

All travel suppliers are facing record cancellation numbers because of the pandemic and the booking infrastructure is under significant pressure. While work is underway to improve this, there is no overnight fix to an operational challenge of this scale.

If you have booked your cruise holiday through a travel agent, the best way to get updates during the refund process is to speak to the agent directly and they will liaise with the cruise line, wholesaler or supplier on your behalf.

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In addition, travel agents are under considerable pressure at a time when travel restrictions have severely impacted their businesses. In some cases, suppliers will refund in one batch which in turn needs time to unbundle and reconcile against each individual customer booking. This can add additional time to the overall refund process. We ask for your understanding and patience for our valued CLIA Travel Agent partners as they work to support you in challenging times.



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The benefit of future cruise credits

While it may not be an option for everybody, future cruise credits offer cruise customers who are unable to travel a great way to hold on to their holiday and in many cases receive generous incentives. Additionally, as a holder of a Future Cruise Credit, customers will generally have access to the most up-to-date offers and availability as cruising starts operating again, something CLIA and all our member cruise lines are working to facilitate with all relevant authorities as soon as possible.

In this together

As a people-first industry, we are incredibly grateful for the patience and understanding of our customers. Our cruise lines and travel agent members understand your concerns and are working to overcome delays as best they can. We apologise for any inconvenience this process has caused.

Please be assured that our whole industry, including our cruise lines, travel agents, ports, and industry bodies are rallying together at this difficult time and will continue to support you as best we can.

If you have further questions or concerns about your cruise booking, refunds or credits, please contact your travel or cruise agent directly.

We look forward to the time when our members can return to cruise operations and safely welcome you on board again.



Fast Fact

In Australia - one in 13 jobs are impacted directly by travel or tourism, so most of us know someone whose livelihood is dependent on the industry's recovery.