

Travel Insurance Considerations for Today's COVID-19/Pandemic World

Even though we may be entering the wake of COVID-19/Pandemic World, there still may be some uncertainty for at least the next year or maybe even longer, continuing to make long-term planning of any sort tricky. Many Richmond Ski Club members may continue to have concerns and may wonder what Travel Insurance Option would work best during the wake of this pandemic. **Force Majeure clauses may be in effect as well, but how they relate to various circumstances will vary depending on the insurance carrier, so be sure to ask.**

The Richmond Ski Club Board of Directors strongly suggests that each of its members who are considering an RSC trip do their own research to determine the best options for their own comfort and needs. Travel insurance policies are the most comprehensive option but are often difficult to navigate. The RSC Board cannot stress the importance of reading all the fine print to be sure you fully understand what each policy will and will not cover.

First, here's how travel insurance generally works.

These policies are designed to cover "unforeseen losses incurred while traveling" and include a wide range of things, from lost luggage to the cost of meals and accommodations during an unexpected delay to additional medical expenses resulting from an on-trip injury or illness.

Trip cancellation is typically included in standard policies and reimburses 100% of a traveler's prepaid and non-refundable expenses—**if the reason for cancellation is on the policy's approved list**. The most common covered reasons are a trip participant's illness (including COVID-19 illness), injury, or death of the traveler/traveling companion, or a family member. Reasons such as inclement weather, terrorism, and natural disasters may be included but check the fine print. **Standard Policies must be purchased prior to final trip payment to tour operator.**

Most policies will not cover any cancellation related to Covid-19.

To be covered for trip cancellation, the impacting event must be listed in their insurance policy certificate. **Viral outbreaks, pandemics, and epidemics are not typically listed within a standard policy. Cancelling because one is too scared or concerned to travel will not be covered.**

A Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) policy may provide an exception.

It really does mean for "nearly any reason" (other than fear of travel); *i.e.*, my dog is sick, not liking the snow forecast, not getting along with traveling companion, etc. **However, not all CFARs cover cancellation due to pandemic situations or COVID-19-related travel fears, so be sure you understand the reasons for cancelling that are listed in your insurance certificate!**

CFARs have extremely strict rules on when the policy must be purchased or added to an existing policy and the date seems to vary between carriers. Most state that a policy must be purchased within 14 days **of the date on your check or charge for initial trip payment**. Other policies say 20 days, and still others say 24 hours. Be sure to do your research prior to making your first payment.

Generally, a "cancel for any reason" policy covers no more than 75% of the full cost your trip if cancellation reason is not explicitly listed as covered within your policy certificate (if reason is listed as allowable the 100% refund will apply). **To cancel for any reason, you must cancel no later than 48 hours prior to trip departure date. CFAR policies typically cost about 40% more than a standard policy.**

NOTE: "time is of the essence" if considering a CFAR policy – DON'T DELAY!

Travel Insurance Search Engines:

www.sevencorners.com or www.squaremouth.com Other Options:

Ask your Trip Leader – Most Tour Operators Offer Travel Insurance

Call Myra at Travel Protectors 1-703-443-9055

NOTE: ANY OPTIONS PROVIDED BY YOUR TRIP LEADER OR AS MENTIONED ABOVE ARE ONLY INTENDED TO SERVE AS A STARTING POINT FOR YOU TO BEGIN YOUR OWN RESEARCH! AND AS ALWAYS NOTED, TRIP INSURANCE IS OPTIONAL BUT HIGHLY ENCOURAGED!