



Communication on tools to support Ticket Exchange and Customer Vouchers

Dear Passenger Standards Conference Representatives,

The COVID-19 crisis and the resulting government-ordered border closures and travel restrictions have caused airlines to have to cancel more than one million flights globally. This has led to changes in how airlines are processing refunds or offering credit for future flights.

Airlines have developed different policies with regards to refunds, exchange policies and the issuance of vouchers, taking into account the different and evolving regulatory requirements across jurisdictions. Alongside existing automation standards and industry data distribution methods used widely by airlines and systems today, a centralized method or tool to enable airlines to communicate this crucial information directly to the travel agent community in a structured form is key to ensure that agents have access to and act on relevant and up-to-date information from each participating airline in a timely manner.

A Central Repository

With the goal of facilitating greater transparency and efficiency, IATA has developed a central [Repository for Voucher and Ticket Exchange Policies](#). The information contained in the IATA repository is public, neutral, presented by airlines in a secure, concise and structured way and it supports processes that do not require automation. As an industry asset, IATA's repository can be used alongside automation infrastructure such as ATPCO General Rules, Category 16 (Penalties), Voluntary Changes (Category 31), Voluntary Refunds (Category 33), as well as ATPCO's Routehappy Rich Content UTAs (Universal Ticket Attributes) and UPAs (Universal Product Attributes). Reassurance UPAs (Universal Product Attributes) are a source of measures airlines are taking to protect passengers during the crisis. These airline filings are used to enable GDS and sales channels automation tools.

The repository of policies ensures that all stakeholders, including front line travel agents, can easily see and have access to airlines' policies. It describes the general approach airlines are taking with regard to ticket exchanges and vouchers. In many circumstances, airlines enable pricing automation by publishing corresponding fare and rule data.

IATA urges all member airlines to [contact us](#) and make their policies available within this repository and to encourage your travel agency partners to use it as a neutral and trusted source of information.

Consistency in Data

Airlines need to ensure that when publishing information in the IATA repository, the information is consistent with the data the airline published in systems for pricing automation.

The generally accepted practice is to use pricing and retailing automation where airline instructions can be automated to minimize disputes between business partners. In cases where non-automated and automated airline policies are in conflict, best practice is for all parties to work together to ensure that the airline's intention is clear, and that all available information is aligned. IATA and ATPCO will work together with the travel industry to assist airlines in achieving this objective.



New ATPCO Solution: Emergency flexibility for conditions on existing tickets

To ensure correct processing within an automated pricing environment, ATPCO is working with subscribers and airline customers, within the framework of the technical information contained in the IATA paper [Customer Vouchers – Information for Airlines](#), to resolve the issue of relaxing certain rule conditions on prior-issued tickets, primarily to retain the value of the product for future use by the passenger. In short, ATPCO's technical industry standard for pricing automation will allow an airline to distribute data in the form of a general rule that states their COVID-19 policy that they wish to have applied at the time of reissue of the ticket. This data will allow the automation of reissues and/or refunds of the new rule conditions rather than those that were in effect at the time of the original ticket sale.

ATPCO anticipates that this will be a capability that is only allowed under emergency and major incident application, and use will be controlled by ATPCO customer service and policies. This new feature will be available through all major pricing and reissue systems from 7 June, 2020.

This new ATPCO solution is enabling even more airlines to resume automated reissues and refunds in all systems, increasing the volume of eligible tickets for automated servicing by airlines and travel agents.

It is the responsibility of each airline to review with their own legal counsel the use of this capability and adherence to their individual conditions of carriage.

How do I receive more information?

Follow this [link](#) for further ATPCO developments and voucher-related information updates. More information on ATPCO's Reassurance UPAs (Universal Product Attributes) for sales channels, can be found [here](#).

For more information about other voucher-related IATA activities, please check the www.iata.org/voucher-initiatives webpage and [contact us](#) to learn more. Members of the IATA team will be also reaching out to airlines over the coming weeks to discuss participation.

Best regards,
IATA Airline Distribution Standards Team