

# Assessing Business Travel Compliance: Two Ways To Ensure Take-Off!

**The Covid-19 pandemic affected many things, not least the way we work. The crisis necessitated the rise of the ‘working-from-home’ phenomenon, forever changing how organisations and employees structure their working days. Since then, WFH has spurred further changes, one of them particularly prevalent in the world of global mobility, and which we might call the ‘working-from-the-holiday-home’ phenomenon; essentially, people are choosing longer ‘holidays’ (sometimes very much longer!) by mixing leisure and pleasure with work while they are away. Other forms of remote working are also fast developing, such as “Bleisure” or “Workation”.**

This trend is part of a broader revival in travel globally, but combining business with leisure abroad, or across State lines, and other forms of remote working can create significant new challenges for affected organisations. Keen to be seen as attractive employers, so they can succeed in the war for talent, companies are often happy to agree to ‘work-from-anywhere’ arrangements, as long as compliance, reputation and duty-of-care risks are largely surmountable and are managed by a Remote Work policy.

Attitudes towards compliance and duty of care have changed enormously in recent years and interest in data, consulting and technologies relating to these issues is growing fast as they become key concerns. Part of the reason for companies seeking guidance is the often heavy administrative burden that compliance in particular can impose on busy global mobility teams when it comes to remote working.

The good news is that there are ways to lighten such burdens, in the form of technology solutions. For instance, our software helps clients manage all compliance and duty-of-care risks associated with

business travel and remote working (or WFHH!). Stakeholders grappling with such issues should explore the technical capabilities, integration possibilities and likely cultural compatibility of vendors’ platforms and select the one best suited to facilitating and automating safe and compliant travel for their international workforce.

With Tracker Software in hand (or even without it, albeit less easily) a compliance assessment for each trip, whether it be for business travel or remote working reasons, can be made. Such assessments are best done before travel is booked, but they can also be made afterwards. So, how do they work?

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## Pre-Booking Compliance Assessment

When an employee informs the organisation about an upcoming business trip or period of international remote working prior to booking it, a compliance assessment can be made there and then before the project advances further, given the right tools. Typically, it is most easily done in an app-based platform, using a rules engine to determine whether any legislation will be triggered and what administration will be needed (posted worker declarations,

AIs or CoCs, work permits etc). It is likely to be linked to an approval process, whereby a high proportion of trips might be automatically approved to allow prompt and effective travel, but with some trips left pending or denied if the risk to the organisation is deemed too high. Rules engines allow trip details to be assessed instantly, and not only on a case-by-case basis, but also tracking the cumulative effects on compliance of the posted person or teams in a location, all of which will have a bearing on whether supporting documentation is required.

The pre-booking questionnaire for employees needs to be as short as possible to minimise the administrative burden, but it must capture everything necessary for making an accurate assessment. The focus does not have to be solely on compliance; security and risk management can also be assessed using the leading software platforms. Furthermore, previously common secondary processes, such as the software provider contacting the traveller to learn more about their needs, are usually no longer required with these solutions. The idea is to capture all necessary information in a single visit by the traveller to the app, portal or platform. A key piece of information here is the ‘why’, or ‘trip purpose’ – what will your traveller be doing in the destination country? This will impact the result of the compliance assessment and whether action is required.

Upon approval, a code can be issued to prove the traveller has followed agreed processes, and API integration with travel booking tools means they may be required to deliver this code upon booking their flight or claiming trip-related expenses. Organisations often have groups of travellers who need to travel at the last minute, for which exceptions can be granted, with compliance processes happening in a retroactive fashion if the trip is deemed risk-worthy.

Both the pre- and post-booking assessment models rely on a core traveller ‘profile’, often gathered from an integration with an HR information system. Profile information includes things like nationality and legal and tax residency, which provide further background on personal circumstances, improving the accuracy of the compliance assessment.

**Post-Booking Compliance Assessment**

Under this model, the organisation is likely to be using some sort of travel booking tool. As such, this method is only suitable for business travel purposes, and the travel booking tool will be the starting point for any assessment. The trip is booked and a downstream feed is taken from the booking tool to a compliance and duty-of-care rules engine. The traveller has their ticket and is prepared to travel regardless of the outcome of any assessment.

This type of assessment is usually done without the traveller engaging directly with the platform. Typically, the organisation using this model is looking to perform any compliance administration in a parallel or retroactive fashion – not prior to the trip booking. This is likely to be done on behalf of the traveller by an internal team, HR shared-service centre or vendor ecosystem.

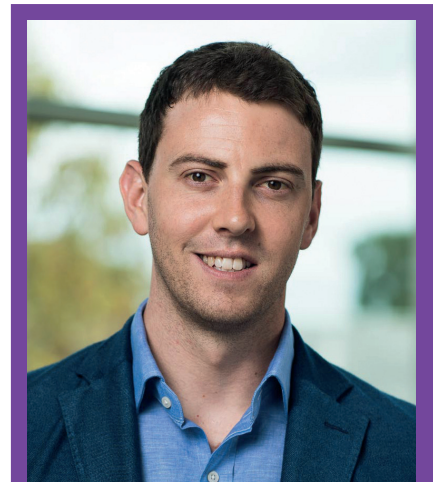
A limitation of this model is that its success is dependent on the quality of the data that emerges from the travel booking tool. It is standard practice to capture ‘where’ and ‘when’ but rarely do these tools capture the ‘why’. If they do capture this, it will be in scant detail, perhaps limited to three or four pre-determined options (e.g. internal meeting, external meeting, conference, etc.) which are not enough to accurately assess whether a posted worker declaration, an AI/CoC, work

permit or other piece of legal administration will be necessary.

**Conclusion**

It is not always possible for employers to be one-hundred-percent compliant when it comes to the many types of business travel. Sometimes it is unclear whether a compliance risk arises or not, and employers might decide that the needs of the business override worries about grey areas. Legislation is being created or rewritten all the time around the world, and this is a rapidly changing legal landscape that only the best technologies can keep up with. Properly assessing compliance using either of the models described above, facilitated by a leading app or other software platform, gives you the best chance of ensuring there will be no damage to your company’s reputation.

Ultimately, you and your colleagues in the compliance and travel stakeholder teams will know which model best suits your employees, corporate culture and risk appetite. When you come together to assess these models, be reassured that by implementing either of them you will be attempting to meet the requirements of global compliance legislation, while promoting free-flowing travel, protecting the reputation of your organisation and offering your travelling employees a feeling of safety and security when working abroad in an increasingly compliance-conscious world.



**TOM CROSBY**

Tom leads the relationships Tracker Software Technologies (TST) has with our new and prospective Clients. There are many variables when implementing compliance processes, from customer experience and technology configuration to cross-functional collaboration and Tom helps compliance stakeholders navigate this environment to reach a solution that works for the company and their travellers. Tom can be found on LinkedIn, or contacted at [Tom.Crosby@tst-international.com](mailto:Tom.Crosby@tst-international.com), if you wish to explore the contents of this article in greater detail.

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