

**TripActions®**

# Prioritizing Business Travel Continuity for Global Emergencies

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## Introduction

### **Travel is an essential part of how organizations do business, and yet travel can also mean increased exposure to risk.**

Most business trips go as planned, and it seems there's nothing worse than a delayed flight to throw a wrench in your traveler's plans. **But once an employee leaves home, the potential for everything from minor medical issues to global emergencies increases. Having a plan in place to manage those risks, take care of your employees, and ensure business travel continuity is essential both for their well-being and the success of the company.**

Imagine a scenario in which several employees are abroad when a health emergency takes hold. As we've seen recently, the situation can evolve quickly from the mere hint of a new virus to a blacklist of certain travel destinations. Concern around what could be a pandemic grows. Supplies run short. International flights are cut. Emergency measures are put in place to stop movement in and out of affected areas. Communication may become difficult as networks are overloaded. Those with the misfortune to find themselves in an affected area may be quarantined by authorities for weeks or months. All of this is why it's important to get ahead of unexpected global events before they happen.



## Complex Global Challenges Call for Thorough Planning

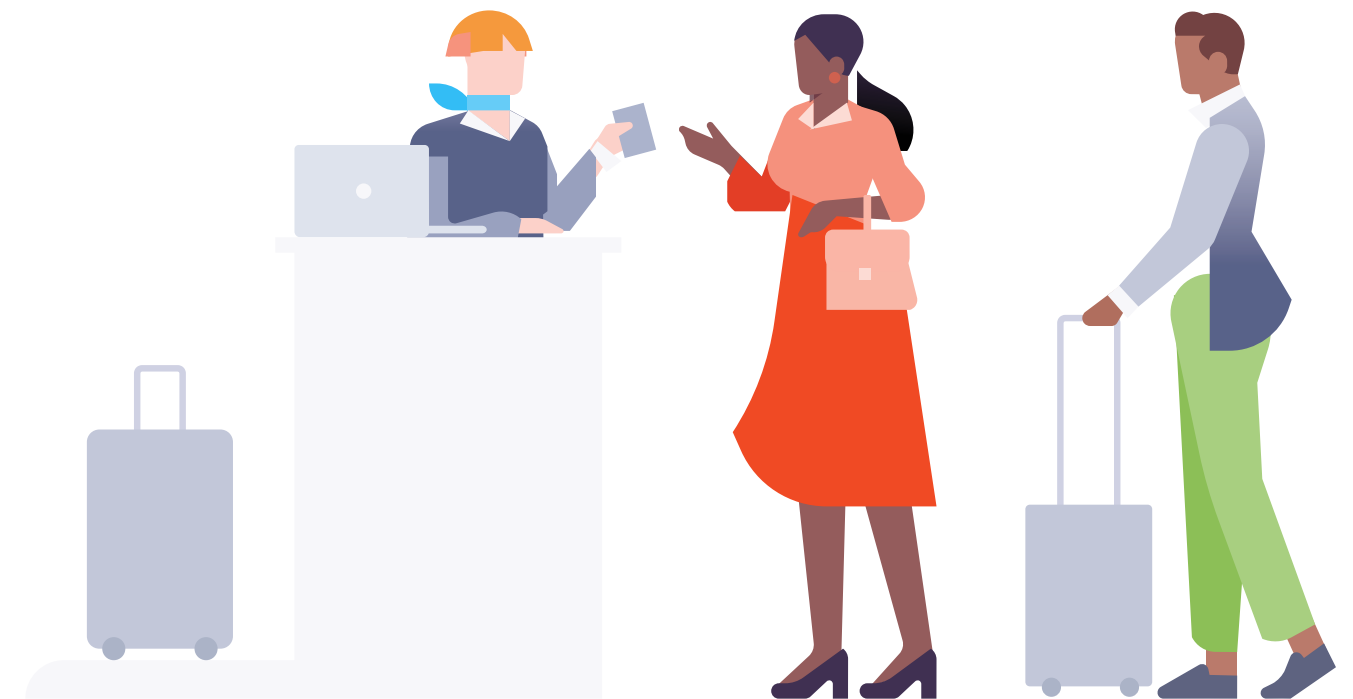
If your traveling employees were affected by something like this...

- Would you be able to quickly locate them?
- Do you have a plan for how to get your staff home as quickly and safely as possible?
- Do your employees know what to do in the event they are stranded and unable to contact headquarters?

These questions could apply to any number of global emergencies – from natural disasters to political unrest and health crises like the coronavirus. Even a relatively small storm on a global scale could result in employees finding themselves in harm's way and out of contact.

Planning ahead, therefore, is key. You need a good policy in place to protect employees and a robust plan for all possible scenarios. **Above all, you need to know where employees are, and employees need to know what they should do if things take a turn for the worse.**

In this ebook, we'll give you all the information you need to effectively prepare, communicate, and implement a risk management program that ensures business continuity and keeps your travelers safe no matter where they are.



# Duty of Care & Business Travel Continuity

As organizations expand globally, managing travel operations and traveler safety becomes increasingly complex. Ensuring your organization can respond and adapt quickly during times of disruption to care for travelers is key to maintaining business travel continuity.



## Duty of Care & Business Travel Continuity

### Employees Should Feel Confident

Having high standards and fostering a strong culture around duty of care to ensure business travel continuity is an important step for any company to take long before a global situation emerges. Traveling employees need to know they have the full support of the company so they can focus on doing their jobs – whether that's across town or a 15-hour flight away. That in turn will translate into a feeling of trust throughout their working life at the company.

In many places there are legal requirements around providing a reasonable level of care for employees. But the importance of this goes much deeper than legal obligations, and in many cases your own standards should exceed baseline requirements.



### Building Trust & Ensuring Safety in Both Directions

Duty of care is about caring for employees and developing a level of trust, safety, and comfort that goes both ways. It's also a matter of realizing that employees' physical and mental well-being is essential to your company's success. In the end, it is an investment in human capital that aids both company culture and the bottom line. If business is being held back because of apprehensions around travel, and employees don't feel they can give their full focus to the task at hand because they don't feel cared for, then performance and results will suffer.

A [BTN survey](#) of 229 travel managers, travel buyers, and corporate safety and security managers found that in their ability to respond to emergencies:

- **Only 27% had a documented response process that was consistently applied and communicated**
- **Only 4% incorporated training to improve response speed and effectiveness**

According to this research, the majority of travel teams are left without contingency plans in place, neglecting traveler safety, well-being, and morale.

**As duty of care takes a more prominent stage in evolving global emergencies, and technology continues to advance the travel management space, companies are now looking at how their TMC can ensure business travel continuity via complete platform adoption and total visibility.**

# Best Practices for Ensuring Business Travel Continuity

Ensuring you take certain key steps as a company, and that travel managers and employees know their roles well, will go a long way toward maintaining business travel continuity. It is well worth the time and effort to prepare for all possible emergencies, make sure protocols are easily accessible and understood by employees, communicate what to do in case of emergencies regularly, and facilitate the application of these measures in the real world.



# Best Practices for Ensuring Business Travel Continuity

## Preparation:

Thinking through the range of possible issues that could arise in the field and how to respond to them is a critical first step. When processes are well-established and everyone knows their role, things can run smoothly even in extreme situations.

Organizations should start by determining answers to these key questions:

<div>1</div> <div>Who decides when a developing situation requires intervention by the company?</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Who is in charge of staying on top of updates from the locations where employees are traveling or due to travel to, at any given time?</div>	<div>3</div> <div>How would you get employees to safety in any number of situations that could arise from various parts of the world?</div>	<div>4</div> <div>What resources are there in any given location for medical support, evacuations, and more?</div>	<div>5</div> <div>If primary communication methods fail, do you have a backup?</div>
<div>6</div> <div>Do you have a way to see all employee whereabouts in one easy-to-use interface for quick reference?</div>	<div>7</div> <div>Are you able to blacklist specific cities, countries, and/or continents from travel if a crisis occurs?</div>	<div>8</div> <div>If travel needs to be rearranged, can employees do this easily through the travel management program? Is there 24-hour support built into your travel management system, and do employees know how to access it?</div>	<div>9</div> <div>For any particularly difficult or risk-prone locations your employees travel to, is there a need for special precautions to be taken or training to be given?</div>	<div>10</div> <div>Is your plan flexible, and can it grow and change with the scope and needs of the business and its employees, particularly in times of crisis?</div>

## Best Practices for Ensuring Business Travel Continuity

### Communication:

It's important that as policies and documentation are created, they are clearly communicated with employees. All travelers should understand without a doubt the extent to which support is available and how to get it.

This can be achieved by a combination of accessible and concise information, which could be available online, through your preferred channel(s) of communication, or even in print form.

Employees can be encouraged to do the following:

- Attend trainings to ensure they know protocol should a situation arise on the road and they need to get help or advice from their manager or travel manager.
- Run basic emergency and trauma response training at regular intervals.

- Have emergency contact information at hand for the place(s) they are traveling to, including police and local embassy details.
- Know the plan should they lose the ability to call and/or email. Where will they go to get back in contact and who will be their point of contact?
- Know how and where to access emergency funds should the need arise, including if local businesses, including banks and ATMs, are shut down.

Employees should be up to speed on all of these before going out on a trip, even to a relatively low-risk destination, while finance leaders should consistently review their travel management solution's business travel continuity features to ensure everything is optimized to care for travelers and report on crucial data points in the case of a crisis.

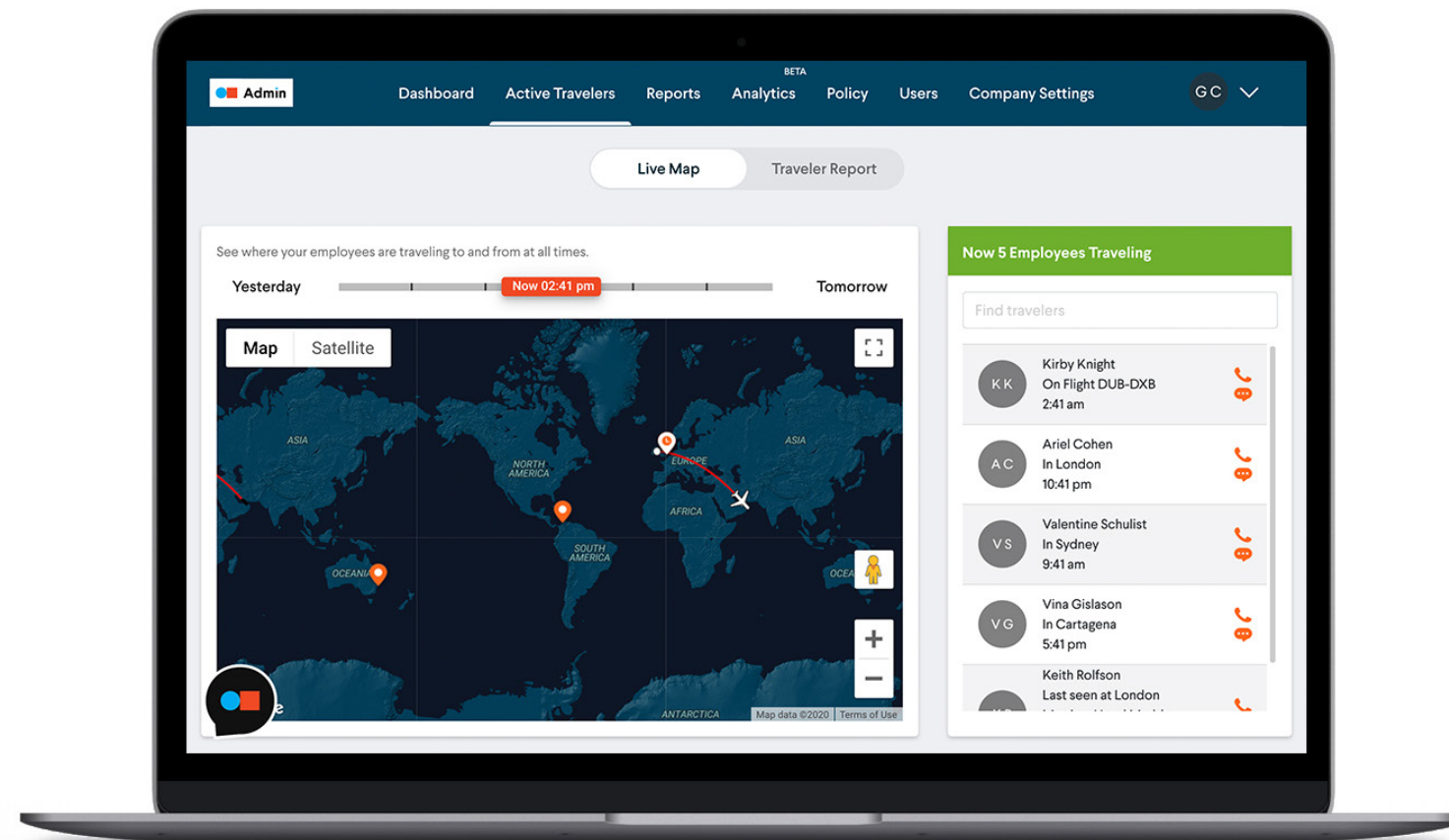
Getting the right pieces in place beforehand will help reduce workload, confusion, and stress if and when an actual emergency occurs.

# Best Practices for Ensuring Business Travel Continuity

## Visibility:

Once your organization feels confident in its level of preparedness for whatever might come along, it's *crucial* to maintain visibility of employee whereabouts and their travel plans.

The organization should know at a glance which employees are traveling, where they are going, where they are staying and for how long, where they've recently traveled, what current and future trips they've planned to at-risk areas, and most importantly – how to reach them at any given time.



TripActions live traveler map shows where employees are traveling around the world.

Additionally, you should be proactive in evaluating risks to determine solutions to developing situations. This could include:

- Monitoring employee travel and anticipating potential issues, from health emergencies to disruptive weather to protests.
- Monitoring communications from public health authorities and government agencies both at home (for example, advice from the [World Health Organization](#), US [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), or [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)) and in the places with developing situations where employees are or will soon be.
- Knowing how to contact all employees at any given time (including backup options while they're traveling, for example the hotel front desk and the local office number).

## Best Practices for Ensuring Business Travel Continuity

### Facilitation:

Having the right tools, teams, and policies in place to facilitate quick response in the event of something like a global situation is the final step, and one of vital importance. All of the pre-planning and communication are only as good as the tools you have at hand to actually respond to emergencies. A modern, responsive Travel Management Company (TMC) complete with an online booking tool, travel agency service, and self serve options are central to ensuring business travel continuity and the health and safety of your employees.

The benefits of implementing a high-quality TMC designed for today's reality are many, including key features like:

**A centralized travel booking platform** ensures global visibility. An easy-to-use, all-in-one travel booking and management platform that captures all employee travel data means you'll always have an accessible, live record of where employees are traveling, for how long, and the details of their stay should an emergency occur. Unmanaged travel processes or antiquated systems that fail to properly care for users leave you helpless in trying to achieve a high level of business travel continuity because of lack of visibility resulting from a lack of adoption.

**Full visibility over employee travel** comes when employees are booking through the organization's chosen TMC. Distilling data into actionable, accessible dashboards and reports makes understanding traveler whereabouts, pivoting quickly where necessary, and implementing policy change easier. From live traveler maps to blacklisting locations, travel managers can be proactive in planning and making quick decisions when they have flexible travel management tools.

**Easy access to quick comms and 24/7/365 travel agents no matter where your employees' travel itineraries take them.** The value of simple, always-on communication channels via mobile, phone, or web for employees cannot be overstated. Having to contend with outdated systems not designed for global business is detrimental to employees out in the field. That is true even during normal travel conditions, when they should be focused on what they need to accomplish when there rather than the process of getting there.

# Best Practices for Ensuring Business Travel Continuity

BETA

Send Notification

Title

ACTION REQUIRED

Body

An incident has been reported in the area where you are traveling. Please reach out to a Traveler Experience Agent to arrange safe travel home.

Send

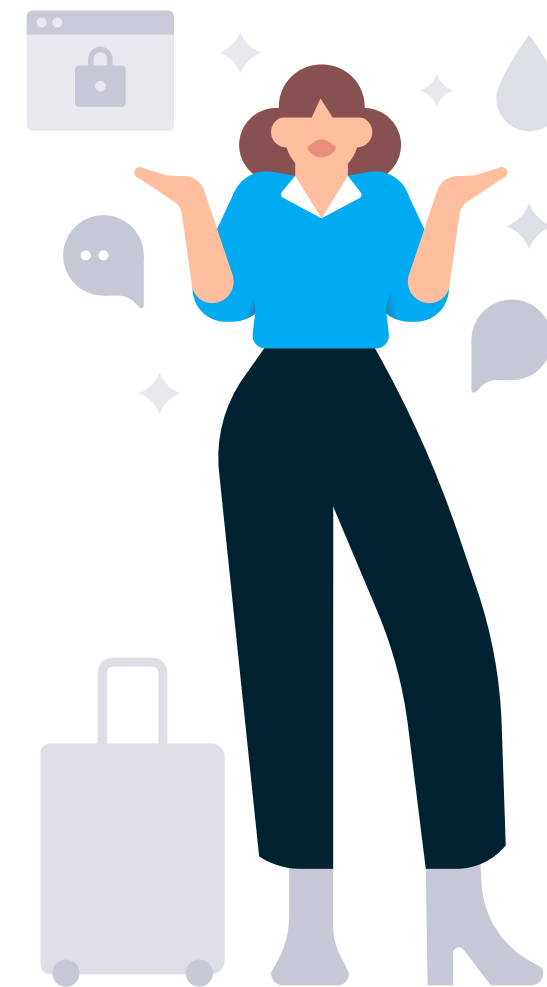
Close



For example, TripActions provides the ability to communicate en masse and directly with individual travelers via the Admin Dashboard. Travelers receive the notifications right at their fingertips on their mobile via the TripActions app (or when logged in to the desktop app).

# Where Things Can Go Wrong

There are several issues that can derail plans for taking care of employees while on the road, but the following three are the most common and impactful. Organizations would do well to ensure these potential problems are proactively addressed:



## Where Things Can Go Wrong

### **Behind-the-times travel programs and booking platforms.**

Corporate travel policies and systems that hinder rather than facilitate effective travel planning all tend to have the same effect: they push employees away from the centralized booking system and encourage them to book outside of it. That includes using antiquated travel management tools that don't make use of the latest advances in technology and data management. Getting this right is the first step in being able to drive business travel continuity and duty of care. Without it, you won't have employee adoption of the tool--and the resulting visibility into employees' travel data. That severely limits your ability to respond in real-time to any problems that arise.

### **Lack of clarity around policy, protocols, and what happens in the event of emergencies.**

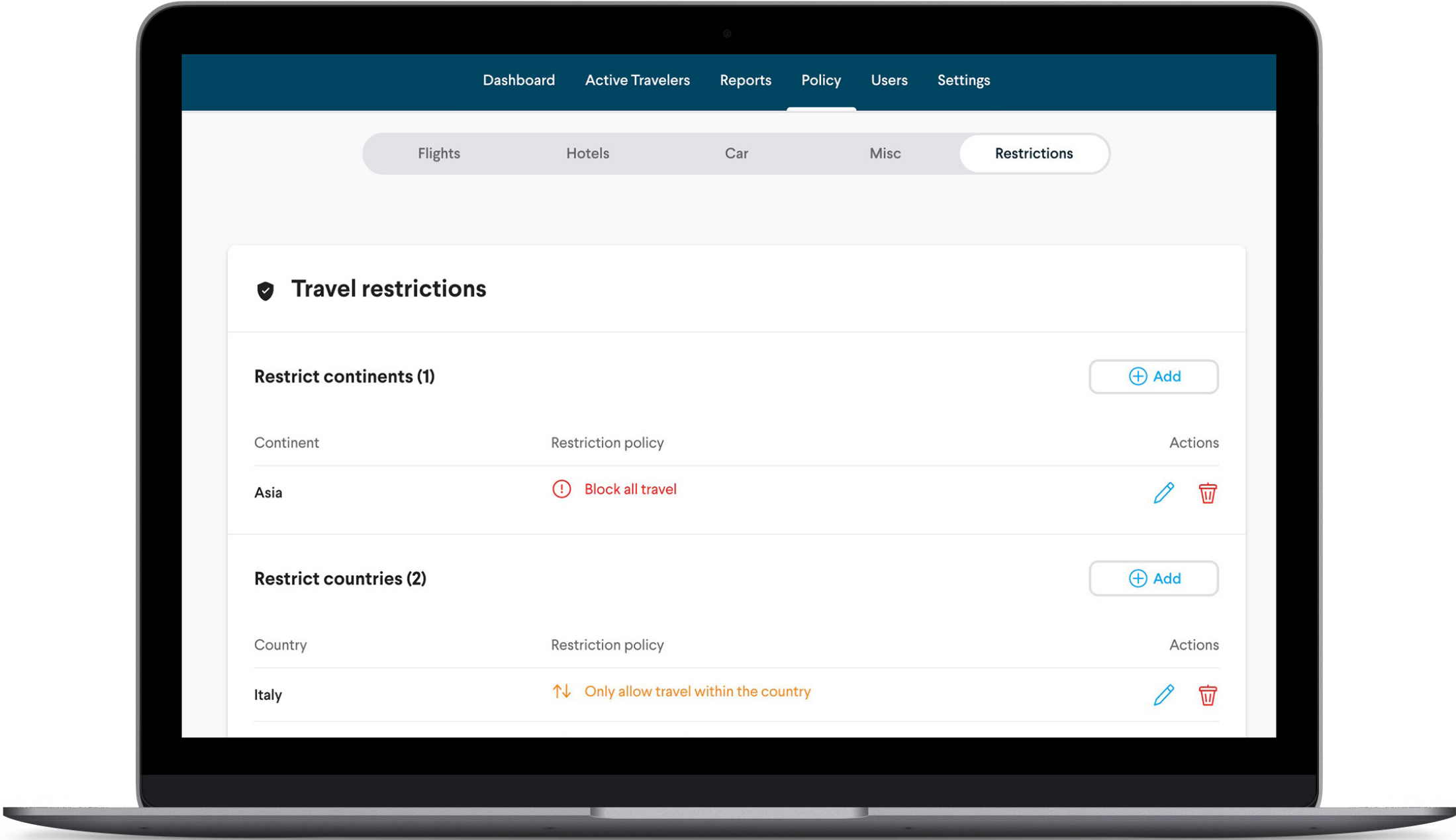
Your organization could have an admirable policy when it comes to duty of care, but if employees aren't adequately briefed, it won't be very effective. Confusion around how to respond to disruptions – whether it's a missed flight connection or being stuck in quarantine – can lead to mistakes and missteps in the field. Adequate education and effective communication for employees could mean the difference between a situation spiraling out of control and getting employees back home safely.

### **Employees not feeling supported in the field.**

Without duty of care measures in place, employees risk feeling unsafe and unsupported on the road – which can lead to a detrimental effect across all aspects of the business. Policy needs to be carefully considered for real-world applications, and designed to keep employees safe and healthy wherever they may be. Over-communicate preparedness for emergencies, share reminders of useful emergency contact numbers, and review employee travel insurance. Where necessary, issue situational health advice, which may even come down to restricting travel to high-risk locations.



# Where Things Can Go Wrong



With TripActions, admins have the ability to blacklist cities, countries or continents for bookings, and limit employee travel to or within a given location.

# Conclusion

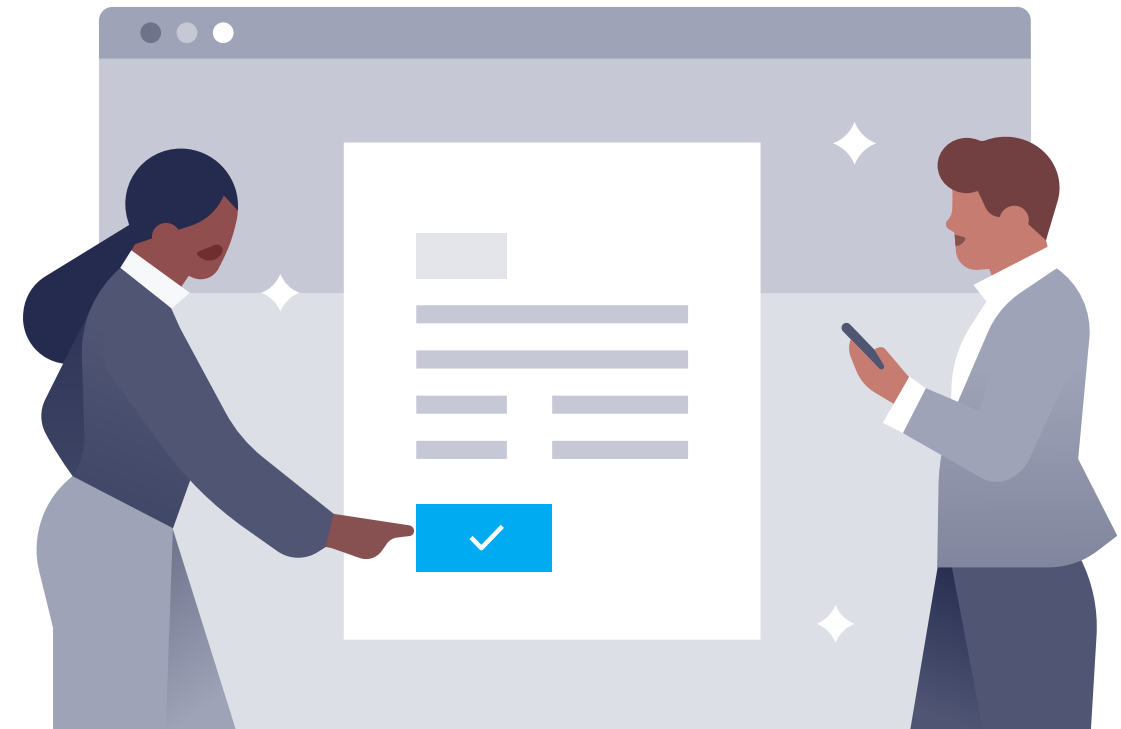
Broader ideas around business travel have evolved considerably in recent years. So too have expectations of your employees, who now see safety and well-being as a fundamental part of their working life, especially when traveling for the company. Your organization wants to attract top talent and optimize spend in good times and bad, and those objectives require keeping business travel continuity top of mind.

This means adopting a consistent approach to travel management, understanding that you must ensure visibility across travel, and partnering with the right TMC to build a travel program that prioritizes employee safety and assures traveler well-being while enabling you to control costs.



## Conclusion

Modern TMCs can support companies as they respond to global situations by providing a centralized place for travel booking, management, monitoring, and communication. This functionality enables teams to optimize business travel continuity efforts with robust insight into travelers, itineraries, and spend in a digestible format. This facilitates fast response times and impactful actions that could help your employees and your business in the moments they most need support.



TripActions is a leading corporate travel management & payments platform. Trusted by nearly 4,000 companies globally, TripActions empowers organizations with real-time data and insights to make business decisions, paired with flexible travel management tools that enable quick and decisive action to keep traveling employees safe, control costs and save money.

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