



UPDATED: Statement on Cuba from Terry Dale, president & CEO, United States Tour Operators Association

NEW YORK (June 7, 2019) – The Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) announced amendments to the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR) impacting travel between the United States and Cuba. The new amendment removes the authorization for group people-to-people educational travel, which previously allowed Americans the ability to travel to Cuba with a licensed tour operator on an approved program.

Effective June 5, 2019, licensed tour operators will no longer be permitted to introduce and operate new programs to Cuba. Cruise lines and airlines will no longer be able to accept bookings for group people-to-people travel for educational purposes. However, it is important to note that OFAC’s regulatory changes include a “grandfathering” provision. The provision allows previously authorized group people-to-people educational travel to continue. Travelers must have completed at least one travel-related transaction prior to June 5, 2019. A travel-related transaction would include purchasing a flight or reserving accommodation. We believe more clarifications will come with respect to the impacts of the amendments.

Since its inception more than 40 years ago, the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) has supported an open borders policy and will continue to advocate for the growth of the travel and tourism industry inside and outside of the United States. These new regulations are counter to USTOA’s core belief in freedom of travel for Americans. The industry will adjust how it does business under the new rules, and we will continue to clarify and comply. However, USTOA will be on the front lines of the industry advocating that the CACR be amended to re-allow group people-to-people educational travel. USTOA will be voicing our stance on these announcements at the upcoming USTOA 2019 Congressional Caucus.

These regulations are effective as of June 5, 2019. For other questions related to travel to Cuba, OFAC has provided a [frequently asked questions list](#).

**About USTOA:**

Representing nearly \$19 billion in revenue, the member companies of U.S. Tour Operators Association provide tours, packages and custom arrangements that allow 9.8 million travelers annually unparalleled access, insider knowledge, peace-of-mind, value and freedom to enjoy destinations and experiences across the entire globe. Each member company has met the travel industry’s highest standards, including participation in the USTOA’s Travelers Assistance Program, which protects consumer payments up to \$1 million if the company goes out of business. As a voice for the tour operator industry for more than 40 years, USTOA also provides education and assistance for consumers and travel agents.

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