

Are Carnival Cruises Still Not Worth Recommending?



January 2014

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In our last newsletter, we discussed potential risks involved in recommending Carnival Cruises. Given the string of tragedies that have plagued the world's largest cruise ship operator over the past two years, you may not want to expose yourself to potential liability if things go wrong on a Carnival cruise. When recommending alternative cruise lines, keep in mind that Carnival also owns Princess, Holland America, Seabourn, Cunard, Costa, P&O, AIDA and Ibero, and the same concerns could apply on these carriers. What follows is some more information to keep in mind when helping your clients choose a cruise vacation.

Carnival Knew of Generator Problems on "Poop Cruise"

Negative publicity continues to dog Carnival. In December CNN reported that Carnival was aware of long-standing problems with diesel-powered generators on several of its ships, including the generator that caught fire on the ill-fated Carnival Triumph in February 2013. According to the news report, the Triumph set sail even though Carnival knew the generator was overdue for servicing. And, to add insult to injury, Triumph passengers attempting to sue for compensation for this avoidable 5-day ordeal are being told that their "ticket contract makes absolutely no guarantee for safe passage, a seaworthy vessel, adequate and wholesome food, and sanitary and safe living conditions."

Travel Guarantees Useless for Most Passengers

Since the Triumph disaster, Carnival made attempts to lure passengers back with its 110% vacation guarantee. But beware of the fine print there too: the guarantee is only valid if passengers inform Carnival that they are dissatisfied with the cruise within 24 hours of departure, which is unrealistic for most passengers.

And, while company has modified its ticket contract language since the infamous "poop cruise", passengers still assume significant risk. The Carnival ticket contract states "Guests assume responsibility for their own safety and Carnival cannot guarantee Guest's safety at any time."

While this type of contract is not unique to Carnival, the message to passengers is loud and clear: if you get hurt, don't blame Carnival. Frustrated and injured passengers could look to their travel agents for compensation instead.

No Man-Overboard Technology

Meanwhile, Carnival continues to face questions about its handling of passengers and crew going overboard. A crew member went missing from the Grand Princess in early January, only two months after a passenger had met the same fate on the same ship. In both cases, the company did not take responsibility and was quick to stress that the missing persons had intentionally jumped overboard. However, Carnival and other cruise lines have been criticized for failing to invest in man-overboard technology that would alert crew immediately of someone going overboard. Although this technology exists and the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act (CVSSA) of 2010 requires all cruise vessels to install it, Carnival and other cruise lines have yet to do so across their fleets. Without timely notification of persons overboard, it's nearly impossible to conduct a successful rescue.

Labour Dispute Rages On

The global labour campaign focusing on Carnival grew in intensity in the past month. More than 5,000 people have written to Carnival CEO, Arnold Donald to protest his role in forcing a labour dispute at Crown Holdings, where he is a director. Union members are being asked to choose another cruise line when planning their winter holidays.

In Closing

With the number of disturbing incidents still occurring on cruise ships owned by Carnival, travel agents are advised to act cautiously and responsibly by making their clients fully aware of the risks they may be taking if they decide to book with Carnival.

For more information please call us at 1-888-899-4405, or contact Carnival directly at 1-800-438-6744.

For more information on the labour campaign, see:

www.usw.ca/crownholdings