

Setai San Diego Changes Name

Fifth Ave. Partners, LLC, owners and developers of the hotel, Setai San Diego, are proud to announce a new name for the hotel, Sè San Diego.

The Setai Miami is currently owned by Lehman Brothers. Due to the uncertainty of this ownership, Fifth Ave. Partners, LLC determined that a new hotel name and brand would be best for its development.

The developers believe the meaning of the Chinese word Sè – color, look, quality; expression, sensuality and physical attraction - better represents the level of design, art and experience that will be unique to the San Diego property and long-term vision of the company.

The creation of the Sè hotel brand also supports the owner's desire to have complete freedom to independently create and manage their investments. Fifth Ave. Partners, LLC are currently in advanced planning stages for additional Sè hotels in the Western US and internationally.

For more information about [Sè San Diego](#), please click here.

New Federal Screening Program Means New Rules For Airlines, GDSs

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By Bill Poling

The government is doing the airlines a favor next year by taking over the chore of matching passenger names with the terrorist watch list on domestic flights, but the favor is going to come with a price tag.

Beginning as early as January, airlines, agents and online travel sellers are going to have to record a passenger's full name, gender and birth date. Failure to comply could result in the passenger being denied boarding.

For consumers, the change might mean little more than a one-time adjustment to their pre-boarding mental checklist. The impact on the industry, however, is not yet clear but is likely to be onerous.

Customer relations procedures, reservations systems and back-office tools all will need to be tweaked in a relatively short time, and the government still hasn't nailed down all the details.

The general plan is for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to check the names and to do so with greater accuracy by using the passenger's full name, date of birth and gender.

The Transportation Security Administration spelled out the new requirements for its Secure Flight program in a regulation published at the end of October, but it has not provided an effective date. The Air Transport Association said last week that its members were still awaiting the TSA's "implementation guide."

It is expected that the plan will be phased in, possibly beginning in January with one or two airlines, according to ASTA's Paul Ruden. ASTA and the Interactive Travel Services Association (ITSA) are among several industry groups that have been engaged in an ongoing dialog with the

TSA about implementing the rule. (ITSA represents GDSs, online travel companies and other travel technology firms.)

The TSA made it clear in its new regulation that it was not requiring airlines or GDSs to share passenger name record (PNR) information per se, and the TSA will not be able to access PNR data, an approach designed to avoid privacy issues.

However, the TSA said it could and would require U.S. airlines to provide each passenger's full name, gender and date of birth, whether the data is in the PNR or not.

As a practical matter, however, it appears that the data will go into PNRs, and will be extracted by the airlines and transmitted to the TSA before departure.

Format Uncertainty

Ruden said airlines, GDSs and others in the industry are expected to reprogram their systems in the coming weeks to create the appropriate data fields, though there is apparently some uncertainty about how the data are to be formatted.

In an advisory notice to members about the date-of-birth field, for example, ASTA noted that TSA is requiring airlines to submit the birth date in a YY-MM-DD format, with a two-digit number for the year. ASTA, however, advised agents to be prepared to record it in a YYYY-MM-DD format because airlines will be the ultimate arbiters of how the data are formatted in PNRs and might decide on the longer format, with or without punctuation marks.

For gender, the TSA expects the data field to be either an M or an F.

For the name, the TSA will require airlines to include the full middle name "if available." ASTA has counseled its members to note that the name should match whatever government-issued ID the passenger intends to present at the airport.

The TSA regulation imposes the new requirement on airlines and does not directly require anything from travel agents, online travel sites or GDSs. The TSA said it expected that airlines would be able to ensure that their intermediaries comply.

Ruden said it was his understanding that if an agency client for any reason refuses to provide the information, the agent can still process the booking and the airline can accept the reservation, though the TSA will not permit the airline to issue a boarding pass until the passenger's information is checked against the watch list.

That means that for bookings made sufficiently in advance, airlines can theoretically accept a reservation without the additional passenger information, in the hope that the data can be added to the record at a later time.

To simplify the booking process, however, some airlines or online travel agencies might decide to require consumers to provide the data at the time of booking.

For every domestic flight, the TSA intends to begin matching names against the watch list in stages, beginning 72 hours before departure. The TSA believes that at this point, the reservations

activity for any given flight becomes “stable” enough to begin the process. Up until the 72-hour point, airlines are required to request the passenger information.

For bookings made within the last 72 hours, however, the TSA rule says airlines “must collect” the additional data “at the time of reservation.” Ruden said the implications of that requirement on agents is not yet clear.

During the 72-hour process, the TSA will have the capability to place any passenger name on “inhibited status,” meaning the airline cannot issue a boarding pass to that individual pending further screening or other procedures.

Two More Data Fields

There are two other new data fields involved in the TSA regulation for Secure Flight. Airlines (and presumably agents) are required by the regulation to request the passenger’s Redress Number and Known Traveler Number, if available.

Passengers are not required to provide the data, but if they do so, the data must be entered and transmitted to the TSA along with name, sex and birth date.

The Redress Number is a number that DHS assigns to individuals who are mistakenly delayed or denied boarding because their names are similar to those on the watch list. Passengers in such situations use a redress procedure known as TRIP, for which they are assigned a Redress Number.

The Known Traveler Number is something that TSA plans to develop in the future as a way to identify travelers “for whom the government has already conducted terrorist security threat assessments and has determined do not pose a terrorist security threat.”

The TSA will not compel passengers to disclose these numbers to airlines when they make reservations, but it said individuals who have been issued such numbers “may be more likely to experience delays” if they are not transmitted to TSA along with the other data.

Secure Flight is being implemented in stages, beginning with domestic operations. At a later date, international flights to and from the U.S. will be covered, and the TSA will take over watch-list matching for those flights from Customs and Border Protection, which performs a similar function under its Advance Passenger Information System.

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