



Kirk Moore, the Pass Travel Chairman of the Retiree Association of Flight Attendants (RAFA), regularly publishes an excellent update of pass travel issues of interest to the retirees of United Airlines. Many thanks to Kirk for permitting us to share his update in our own Golden Eagles communications.

## Update from Kirk Moore RAFA!

Retiree Association of Flight Attendants (RAFA)

Pass Travel UPDATE January 6, 2018

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If you read this UPDATE on the RAFA website the links may work better:

<http://www.rafa-cwa.org/page-1836169>

### 1) Pass Travel Tax Reporting for Retirees 1099 & W-2

By January 31, 2018 United will be mailing 1099-MISC forms to retirees whose taxable pass riders accrued \$600 or more in pass travel tax value from Nov. 1, 2016 to Oct. 31, 2017. Go to Flying Together > Travel > Pass Travel Report (blue tile) to check on the total "Pass Tax Values" accumulated for those dates. Retirees must report 1099 income on their 2017 tax

returns. More information about IMPUTED TAXES is here:

<http://www.rafa-cwa.org/Costs-and-Imputed-Taxes>

For pass travel on or after November 1, 2017, all taxable imputed income will be reported to retirees on Form W-2 and will no longer be reported on Form 1099. As a result of this change, starting on November 1, 2017, United will begin to collect all federal and state withholding taxes that apply to your taxable pass travel income via quarterly invoice.

The first invoice will be sent in March 2018 for travel from November 1, 2017 to January 31, 2018, and invoices will be sent every three months thereafter. The invoices will be mailed via U.S. mail and will be payable by check or money order.

Be sure your mailing address is up to date. If you need to make a change to your address, go to Flying Together > Employee Services and click the link to "Your Benefits Resources (YBR)" then visit "Your Profile" > "Personal Information" or contact the Employee Travel Center at [1-877-825-3729](tel:1-877-825-3729) (from the U.S.) or [1-847-825-3729](tel:1-847-825-3729) (outside the U.S.) and choose the "dependent management" option to speak to a representative.

Despite the change in reporting, there is no change to how pass travel is taxed. Pass travel by retirees and their spouses, parents and dependent children under age 26 is still not taxable. Pass travel by a retiree's domestic partner and enrolled friends is taxable.

Read important W-2 Pass Travel Tax Reporting information on Flying Together > Travel > W-2 Pass Travel Tax Reporting (in the left column).

Note: The online chart shows "Extended Family Buddies" and "Buddies" are subject to tax; this only applies to employees whose buddies flew before or within 30 days after their retirement date. Retirees are not eligible for the buddy pass program.

## [2\) New enhancements on the United app](#)

From United NEWS Oct 31, 2017

**Now customers and employees/retirees can cancel flights or change segments on paid tickets within the app. Also: we can store MileagePlus and United Club membership cards via Apple Wallet.**

When connecting from a United flight, the following airline partners' boarding passes are now accessible through the United app, with more partners to be added in the near future:

•Adria Airways •Aegean Airlines •Air Canada •Air New Zealand •ANA  
•Asiana Airlines •Austrian Airlines •Azul Brazilian Airlines  
•Brussels Airlines •Cape Air •Croatia Airlines •EVA Airways  
•LOT Polish Airlines •Lufthansa •Scandinavian Airlines  
•Shenzhen Airlines •SWISS •THAI Airways •Turkish Airlines

A "track my bag" feature is currently in "BETA testing" on the app.

**Important notes: to access all features of the United app, including standby listing on United/UAX and myUADiscount ticket purchases, you must LINK your MileagePlus account within employeeRES. Instructions for getting and linking the United app are here and here.**

**Other Airline (ZED) STANDBY travel and boarding passes are not available on the United app at this time. Information about ZED travel is here: [www.rafa-cwa.org/page-1836104](http://www.rafa-cwa.org/page-1836104) or visit FlyingTogether > Travel > OtherAirline/InterlineTravel.**

### **3) Let your pass riders list themselves**

**Retirees may grant their pass riders limited access to employeeRES so they may list themselves on flights. To do so, go to employeeRES >Quick Links > Employee Travel Profile and scroll down to the Pass Rider(s) Profile. In the paragraph below your list of pass riders, click the link to read the “document presentation” for step-by-step instructions.**

**Or click here: PDF of the current version of PassRiderAccess (12/2016)**  
**Once the pass rider has set-up their own password, United will send them an email with this link they use for listing:**  
<https://erespassrider.ual.com/employeeeres/passriderlogin.aspx>

**Remember: Retirees are responsible for the conduct of their pass riders, including appropriate attire, adherence to pass travel guidelines and any service charges / imputed taxes the pass riders incur.**

### **4) Checking loads....use the seat map?**

**Yes and no. Many empty seats on the seat map may already be sold, they just aren't assigned yet. To be sure, check the “available” seats in employeeRES or on the United app (if linked to your MileagePlus account). However, within 20 minutes of departure, most seats have been assigned, so the seat map will more accurately show true available seats.**

**For more details, read this article from the December 2017 RUPA NEWS:**

**RUPA Pass Travel Report December 2017 By Capt Pat Palazzolo**

*Probably the most critical item in Pass Riding 101, besides stuffing your backpack with food so you don't starve to death, is determining how many available seats there are on the flight you want to take.*

*First, let me explain how not to do it. One of the most common errors I hear about is people looking at the seat map on the United app to see how many empty seats there are. This could be a big mistake.*

*If there is only one thing you take away from this humble article today, it is this: The seat map on employeeRes and in the United app displays the seats that are either unassigned or unsold.*

*Let me give you an example. A friend texted me from Honolulu and told me her flight was wide open and showed about 50 empty seats on the seat chart. But as the departure time approached the number of open seats dwindled to five or six. She couldn't believe it. She asked me if that many people had bought seats in the last hour and a half.*

*What most of those “open” seats were, were actually unassigned seats from people who had purchased tickets but not selected seat assignments for whatever reason. When they got to the airport they were given their seat assignment. So unless you're*

*within about 20 minutes of departure, please don't depend on the seat map. It does not reflect the number of unsold seats until you get very close to departure time.*

*With basic economy, this phenomenon may become even more pronounced, as people who purchase basic economy tickets cannot get their seats assigned until they get to the airport.*

*The correct way to get the number of available seats is to go to either employeeRes or the United app and look at the number of available seats. Remember, to use the United app for listing and checking loads, your United app must be linked with your mileage plus number.*

*But even though this is the proper place to determine the number of available seats, many, and I would guess maybe even most, pass riders are missing out on one of the best kept secrets for determining an accurate number of seats available.*

*Note: The Employee Travel Center has responded to the following information about "authorized seats"; please read their comments in red at the end of the article.*

*When you go to either employeeRes or the app, it will clearly show you how many seats are available. And that availability is based on capacity of the airplane minus the number of seats booked with revenue and positive space passengers.*

*But the number of seats actually available is usually larger than that. Let me explain why.*

*Let's assume the airplane we're going to fly on has a passenger capacity of 100 seats. And in this hypothetical example it may show that the company has sold 105 seats. So the number of seats showing as available is -5. Not good you might say! Perhaps. (And this is the point that many pass riders give up and don't fly on that flight.) However, the company will often authorize a larger number of ticket sales than there are seats. Because they expect a number of no-shows from their historical data base.*

*In this hypothetical example, let's assume that on this 100 seat airplane United expects 15 people to no-show. So even though they have sold 105 seats for this 100 seat plane, they can still sell 115 seats before they have to worry about bumping passengers. But most pass riders don't know this.*

*This is another important take away for today. This information is provided by the company in both employeeRes and on the United app. It's just that most pass riders aren't aware of where these numbers are or what they mean.*

*So when checking boarding totals, we see different numbers. The seat capacity, the number of seats sold, and a third number which is very, very important: "Authorized" seats. Authorized seats are the number of total seats the company can sell. And it is quite often in excess of the seating capacity of the airplane.*

*In the example I just gave you, even though the aircraft is oversold by five, they can still sell 10 more seats (up to 115) because they expect a total of 15 seats to go empty because of no-shows. So in a practical sense now, the aircraft is not oversold by five, it actually still has 10 seats likely that will be open. So your chances are pretty good even though it's oversold.*

*Where do we find this authorized number? EmployeeRes.*

*The difference between authorized and capacity can be dramatic. I recall seeing the difference as high as 40 or 50 seats on some flights to Hong Kong. And likewise, when the company expects no no-shows, you will find that capacity is equal to authorized. Where else is the United app.*

*So please keep in mind that nothing is certain, but if you have a big gap between the aircraft seating capacity and the number of seats authorized for sale, you can bet that the company is expecting a large number of no-shows. And that bodes well for us pass travelers.*

The Employee Travel Center says: There are a number of key variables and tools Revenue Management uses that go in “authorized” levels. For example, upgrade potential for a certain route and business markets vs leisure markets just to name a few. It’s important to recognize that authorized levels can change significantly on the day of departure and should not be used to determine your chances on clearing the standby list.

Checking pax loads? RAFA recommends:

1) To first get an idea of your chances, use the “available seats” number in employeeRES or on the United app (if linked to your MileagePlus number). Also check the “pass rider list” or “standby list” to see how many pass riders are senior to you on the flight.

2) View the “seat map” to determine actual available seats just before boarding, when it’s most accurate (i.e. Basic Economy pax get assigned their seats at the gate).

3) In “boarding totals”, if there are LOTS more “authorized” seats than aircraft “capacity” then some seats may magically appear at the last minute due to historical upgrades and no-shows. However, the ETC does not recommend relying on that data.

4) Domino effect: If there are earlier flights to your destination on the same day, check those loads. If oversold or they have tons of standbys, some folks on earlier flights may end up on your flight, bumping you down the list. It’s often best to standby for the first flight of the day.

5) Always have a back-up plan of alternative flights (perhaps via different cities) and if United looks really full consider buying a myUADiscount ticket. As an additional back-up, purchase a ZED ticket on another carrier, it can be refunded later if not used (just be sure to cancel it before departure if you get on United).

6) Learn to use your smartphone/tablet to access FlyingTogether and the United app so you can check loads and buy myUADiscount or ZED tickets at the airport or when traveling abroad.

## **5) How Air Travel will change in 2018**

From Conde Nast Traveller

Automatic check-in, robots will help, high-speed inflight wi-fi, biometric

ID, more flight choices, higher bag fees and more disparity in classes...

Read the entire article: <https://www.cntraveler.com/story/how-air-travel-will-change-in-2018>

### **6) Plan ahead: Make sure your ID is valid before flying!**

The following information is from the Department of Homeland Security

The RealID Act passed by Congress in 2005 sets certain standards for issuance of IDs, such as driver licenses. So far, 28 states have complied.

Starting January 22, 2018, travelers who do not have a license from a compliant state or a state that has been granted an extension will be asked to provide alternate acceptable identification. Check your state on this DHS map of non-compliant states/ territories. IDs from states with extensions (yellow on the map) are currently valid until 10/1/2018. If the traveler cannot provide an acceptable form of identification (i.e. U.S. passport, trusted traveler card, etc) they will not be permitted through the security checkpoint.

Beginning October 1, 2020, every traveler will need to present a REAL ID-compliant license or another acceptable form of identification for domestic air travel.

### **7) More United flights for pass riding!**

Besides the flights to SIN, EZE, Hawaii, SYD and Europe mentioned in our last UPDATE (see #5 here) United recently announced:

Seasonal service now SFO to AKL.

More Hawaii flights began Dec 20, more ski destinations on Dec 23.

Many new flights to Mexico!

Re-banking & new domestic routes from ORD, LAX, EWR, IAD & DEN.

Flights to XIY (Xi'an) discontinued.

SFO-Tahiti non-stop flight announced for next fall.

### **8) Have you seen RAFA's website?**

Check out the Travel Benefits tab here: <http://www.rafa-cwa.org>

Read the Pass Travel Program Summary, helpful links, phone numbers & more.

For other Pass Travel Topics: Previous Travel UPDATES

Compiled by Kirk Moore, RAFA Travel Benefits Committee January 6, 2018

*Thank you Kirk Moore!*



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