Travel in Transition: Rethinking Insurance Protection for a Multi-Trip World

Why rising travel frequency, cost, and risk are driving the shift to annual coverage

Executive Summary

Travel behavior has shifted significantly in recent years. What was once an occasional activity is now a consistent part of how people live, with many travelers taking multiple trips each year. At the same time, the cost of travel is rising, and disruptions such as cancellations and medical events are becoming more financially impactful.

Despite these changes, many travelers still rely on single-trip insurance or do not purchase coverage at all, creating gaps in insurance protection.

This paper examines how increased travel frequency, rising costs, and evolving risks are shaping the need for travel insurance. It also highlights why annual, multi-trip coverage offers a more efficient and reliable solution for today's traveler.

Travel Has Changed and It Is Not Slowing Down

Travel is no longer limited to one or two major trips per year. According to recent survey data, more than 63% of travelers take multiple trips annually, with many averaging around three leisure trips per year.[1]

This shift is supported by broader industry growth. The global online travel market generated approximately $667.55 billion in revenue in 2023 and is projected to reach $1.57 trillion by 2030, reflecting sustained demand and increased accessibility.[2]

Travel planning behavior has also evolved. Travelers are spending significant time researching destinations and are increasingly influenced by digital content, with social media playing a role in trip inspiration for the majority of travelers.[3]

The Cost of Travel Is Rising and So Is the Risk

As travel becomes more frequent, the financial investment tied to each trip is increasing.

With higher upfront costs, even minor disruptions can lead to significant financial losses. Disruptions are also common. Claims data shows that trip cancellations account for 74% of all travel insurance claims, making them the most frequent reason travelers seek reimbursement.[5]

These trends highlight a simple reality: as travelers invest more in their trips, the financial impact of unexpected events increases.

According to the U.S. Travel Association, domestic travel costs increased by approximately **20%** year over year, rising from **4,290** dollars on average in 2025 to **5,124** dollars in 2026.[4]

Insights Into Today's Travel Protection Gap

To better understand the modern traveler, Zurich Accident & Health conducted a Leisure Travel Survey to examine travel habits, concerns, and attitudes toward travel insurance coverage.

The findings reveal a clear disconnect between traveler concerns and traveler preparedness.

The survey found that 70% of travelers are concerned about unexpected events while traveling, with medical emergencies and trip disruptions ranking among their top concerns.[6]

Additional findings include:

62%

of respondents plan to travel more than twice this year

14%

expect to take four or more trips

56%

reported primarily domestic travel

17%

reported international travel

27%

reported a mix of both domestic and international travel

When asked about their biggest travel concerns, respondents identified the following:

56%
Flight delays or cancellations

41%
Medical emergencies

39%
Trip cancellations

35%
Political or safety concerns

27%
Natural disasters

20%
Lost luggage

Despite these concerns, the decision to purchase travel insurance remains inconsistent. Only 38% of travelers reported sometimes purchasing travel insurance, while 25% said they never purchase coverage. The most common barriers included cost concerns, the belief that coverage is unnecessary, and perceptions that claims processes are too complicated.[6]

These findings highlight a growing insurance protection gap. Travelers are investing more heavily in experiences and taking trips more frequently, yet many continue to underestimate the financial risks associated with disruptions, particularly medical emergencies abroad. At the same time, perceptions of complexity often stem from not knowing what to expect when a claim occurs. To help address this, Zurich's EverTravel solutions are designed with clear, step-by-step guidance built into the fulfillment experience, so travelers know exactly how to access support and submit a claim when they need it most.

For brokers and affinity organizations, this highlights an opportunity rather than a barrier. Annual, multi-trip coverage is straightforward to position, simple for travelers to use, and often more cost-effective for frequent travelers than purchasing coverage for each trip. Framing coverage this way shifts travel insurance from a "nice to have" for occasional travel to a more practical, consistent approach to managing travel risk.

Did You Know?

Many U.S. primary health insurance plans provide limited or no coverage outside the United States, leaving travelers responsible for many overseas medical expenses.

Many U.S. health insurance plans offer limited or no international coverage, leaving travelers potentially responsible for substantial medical expenses overseas. Emergency medical claims average more than $1,600, while medical evacuations can exceed $200,000 depending on location and severity.[7]

EverTravel provides a significant opportunity to address these gaps. Simplifying travel insurance protection through an annual, multi-trip policy may help address many of the barriers preventing travelers from securing consistent coverage for both domestic and international travel.

Why Annual Travel Coverage Makes More Sense

For today's frequent travelers, insuring trips individually is often inefficient and can lead to gaps in coverage.

Annual, multi-trip travel insurance offers a more practical solution by providing continuous coverage across all trips taken within a 12-month period.

This approach aligns with modern travel behavior:

- Multiple trips throughout the year
- Increased financial investment per trip
- A combination of domestic and international travel
- Greater exposure to delays, cancellations, and medical risks

Key advantages of annual coverage include:

Cost efficiency

One policy can cover multiple trips throughout the year, potentially reducing overall insurance costs compared to purchasing separate policies for each trip.

Convenience

Travelers no longer need to research and purchase coverage every time they book travel.

Consistency

Continuous coverage helps reduce protection gaps and provides greater consistency across every journey.

As travel becomes more frequent and more expensive, annual coverage offers a more practical and reliable way to manage risk.

EverTravel:
Designed for the Modern Traveler

EverTravel annual, multi-trip leisure travel insurance was designed to reflect the realities of modern travel behavior: more trips, higher travel costs, and increased exposure to disruption.

The policy combines robust insurance protection with flexibility, helping travelers stay covered across multiple journeys throughout the year.

Coverage for every trip

EverTravel provides coverage for multiple trips across a 12-month period and allows travelers to include up to six individuals under a single policy.

Coverage highlights

- Trip cancellation and interruption coverage up to 4,500 dollars per trip and 13,500 dollars annually
- Rental car damage coverage
- Emergency medical coverage up to 200,000 dollars per trip
- Lost luggage protection
- Baggage protection up to 2,500 dollars per trip

Additional benefits

- Coverage for trip delays and missed connections
- Protection for baggage and personal effects
- Primary emergency medical and dental coverage
- Emergency medical evacuation and repatriation services
- Coverage for missed cruise or flight connections, including lodging and meals
- Coverage for forfeited prepaid travel arrangements
- Hospitalization benefits for traveling companions

EverTravel also includes access to Zurich Travel Assist™, providing 24/7 travel, medical, and security assistance services worldwide.

The policy is designed to be straightforward and easy to use, helping travelers spend less time navigating coverage details and more time focusing on their travel experience.

Coverage in Action

Did You Know?

Emergency medical evacuations can cost anywhere from $25,000 to more than $250,000 depending on the traveler's location, medical condition, and transportation requirements.[8]

Road Accident in Paris

While visiting Paris with his friends, a father was involved in a serious road accident that resulted in multiple fractures and emergency surgeries. During recovery, family support became essential. Zurich Travel Assist™ coordinated logistics, including transportation for the traveler's partner to Paris and repatriation arrangements once the traveler was medically stable.

Total claims paid exceeded $85,000.[8]

Did You Know?

Hospitalization, surgery, and rehabilitation following a serious injury in the U.S. can quickly exceed $50,000, particularly when specialist care, rehabilitation, and extended recovery are required.[8]

Accident in Chicago

While attending a wedding in Chicago, a woman slipped on icy stairs and fractured her hip. She required surgery, hospitalization, and rehabilitation care. Zurich Travel Assist™ coordinated hospital admission, managed payments, arranged family travel support, and organized transportation home for continued treatment once medically cleared.

Total claims paid exceeded $65,000.[8]

Did You Know?

The average emergency medical travel insurance payout reached approximately $1,654 in 2024, while severe international medical emergencies and evacuations can result in six-figure costs.[9]

Medical Emergency in Spain

While traveling in Spain, a US resident experienced a sudden cardiac event. Because the initial hospital could not provide the level of specialized care required, Zurich Travel Assist™ coordinated a transfer to a higher-level medical facility. Coverage included emergency medical treatment, rehabilitation, medical evacuation, and repatriation services.

Total claims paid exceeded $180,000.[8]

Scenarios for illustrative purposes only

Conclusion: A Smarter Way to Insure Every Trip

Travel is becoming more frequent, more expensive, and more complex. Yet many travelers continue to rely on outdated approaches to insurance protection that no longer reflect how people travel today.

Zurich survey data reinforces this shift, showing that while most travelers are concerned about disruptions, many still lack consistent insurance coverage. This gap highlights the growing need for simpler, continuous protection models that align with modern travel behavior.

Annual travel coverage offers a more streamlined approach to managing travel risk by providing ongoing protection across multiple trips throughout the year. As travel continues to evolve, insurance protection must evolve with it.

To learn more about EverTravel, contact your Zurich representative.

References

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