
Potable partner: International Water-Guard

By **Rick Lundstrom** on May, 8 2020 | Food & Beverage



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When the threat of COVID-19 finally diminishes, commercial aviation will have gone through an industry-changing crucible that will require many aspects of its operations to be looked at differently. Old ways will extinguish and new practices and policies will take their place.

One of perhaps the most maligned aspects of cabin operations has been the boarding and changing of potable water used in lavatories and galleys. It has been long scrutinized in the past because of E. coli and coliform bacteria issues, and the regularity of water changes as well as the sources of the water. Last year, a major study of aircraft tap water by the Hunter College New York Food Policy Center led to sensational headlines and safety warnings.

For the flying public, many of whom carry bottled water in easy reach at all times, has been conditioned to see the product as superior to tap water. The stocked trolleys that trundle along the aisles of long-haul flights, piled high with single-use plastic bottles, is Exhibit A.

[International Water-Guard](#) (IWG), located in British Columbia, Canada, understands it is time for all airlines and passengers to adopt a new method – one that reduces waste and provides more convenience. The supplier plans to bolster airline customer loyalty and give passengers peace of mind when washing their face, brushing teeth and drinking a cup of coffee or tea in flight.



International Water-Guard supplies potable water treatment solutions, including its Passenger Water dispenser (left) and the new UVL1 (right), a water treatment unit for commercial use

IWG supplies potable water treatment units to operators of corporate, head of state, military and VIP aircraft. The company planned a stand at the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg this year to showcase the latest in water treatment units designed for commercial aircraft – the UVL1. The treatment unit can be used in conjunction with IWG’s Passenger Water Dispenser (PWD) that can be positioned at airport gates or onboard the aircraft just outside the galleys.

The PWD is convenient for passengers and crew as it enables passengers to get their own water, while the company’s UVL1 carries out the vital task of ensuring that the aircraft’s drinking water is free of bacteria and viruses.

“The UVL1 can begin to eliminate the wrong perception that bottled water is the only safe water and by doing so, eliminate plastic bottles,” Steven Bis, President and Chief Executive Officer at IWG tells *PAX International*. “This has significant benefit to the environment, as well as cost and logistics benefits to the airline that currently buys bottled water and must dispose of the empty bottles.”

To disinfect the water, the UVL1 uses LED lights that emit ultraviolet light (UV) in the UV-C spectrum, a technology using LED’s that Bis says is just beginning to be applied to aircraft. The UVL1 can be installed in approximately 30 minutes at the water line, just behind the spigot or faucet. Any pathogens that may be in the water supply absorb the UV light, making them unable to reproduce.

“It may not be killed instantly, but the scrambling of the genetic code in the nucleus prevents reproduction, rendering it non-viable and therefore harmless to humans,” says Bis.

The result is drinkable, disinfected water without chemical residue that could potentially harm passengers and degrade components in the aircraft’s water system. Combining the UVL1 with the company’s PWD gives passengers clean, drinkable water access with no human touch points,

effectively reducing the possibility of spreading other germs.

IWG is well known in the business jet environment and has won Suppliers of the Year awards multiple times by a major OEM. In 2019, the company marked its 30th year in business and has a portfolio that includes products for water circulation, filtration, and distribution. It also has developed aircraft weight control products, on-demand heaters, and luxury fixtures for lavatories and galleys. IWG is a Transport Canada approved organization with Supplemental Type Certificates in its home country and in the United States.

Since the company was formed 1989, IWG has supplied more than 4,000 of its products have been installed and are in service today. Other products the company is working on are designed to meet the demands by airlines for weight savings and carbon emission reduction. IWG is developing a line of lightweight faucets and sinks that can be used in lavatories and galleys. The company has also developed Pre-Select, an electronic water quantity controller management system.