

# Some Las Vegas Strip workers see hours cut amid COVID-19 tourism impact

By Bailey Schulz Las Vegas Review-Journal

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Strip workers are starting to see their hours cut as the coronavirus outbreak weakens the travel and tourism industries.

Arturo Tavira, a part-time busser at the Bellagio, said his hours were cut dramatically in recent weeks.

“I recently filed for unemployment, but I am still looking for work,” he said via email.

Brian Ahern, a spokesman for Bellagio operator MGM Resorts International, had no comment on how the virus is impacting business operations and employment.

At least one other Strip operator is cutting back hours for steady extras — those who are not employed by the company but pick up hours when available.

# Job security amid the outbreak

Recent data show U.S. tourism is expected to slip amid the coronavirus outbreak.

A report from U.S. Travel Association released this month found inbound travel to the U.S. is expected to fall 6 percent over the next three months compared to the same period in 2019.

This, in addition to fewer [conventions](#), could be detrimental to Las Vegas' tourism industry. A 2019 LVCVA report found Las Vegas conventions and business meetings generated \$6.3 billion of direct economic impact and about 6.6 million business travelers.

Brendan Bussmann, a partner at Global Market Advisors, said convention cancellations could lead to operators requiring less staff on hand.

“If you don't have the number of guests, you don't necessarily need the number of people to serve them,” he said. “Each Strip property is going to have to evaluate how best they can meet the needs of their guests as well as their operations”

Wynn Resorts Ltd. CEO Matt Maddox told employees last week he expects to see a decline in business that may last for several weeks or months, but assured staff members their jobs are safe.

But steady extras are not currently being used at the property.

In a letter sent to employees, Maddox told employees “we are all in this together” and the “health crisis will not last forever.”

The letter, obtained by the Review-Journal, outlined the [precautionary measures](#) the company has taken to keep employees and guests healthy and safe.

Wynn spokesman Michael Weaver declined to comment on how the virus is impacting business operations and employment.

Spokespeople for Red Rock Resorts, Las Vegas Sands Corp., Caesars Entertainment Corp. and Boyd Gaming Corp. also declined to comment.

Culinary Union Local 226 said it is in the process of negotiating the effects of the virus with employers.

“There are new proposals on the table regarding additional protections for workers in response to the on-going coronavirus pandemic,” according to a statement.

The union said its contracts — which protect 60,000 workers in Las Vegas — have seniority language that states layoffs must be done in a “fair and impartial manner” that ensures when business improves, people will return to work by seniority.

Bussmann said it’s hard to determine how the local workforce will be impacted by the virus. Other major shocks to the city’s tourism industry — like the Great Recession and 9/11 — brought out mixed reactions among operators.

“There were some groups that were able to weather that storm and keep staffing at manageable levels, and you had other groups that had mass

layoffs,” he said. “We will have to see how that shakes out for properties along the Strip.”