



[Business Travelers Dip a Toe in the Sharing Economy](#)

By Jim Gold

September 18, 2015

Business travelers have been reluctant to jump into the sharing economy for transportation or lodging, but that appears to be changing, according to a new survey.

Only 12 percent of Americans have ever used Uber or Lyft while traveling on business, while just 4 percent have ever booked lodging through Airbnb on a work-related trip, says a report by [On Call International](#), a travel risk management company.

Business travel is a \$300 billion-a-year industry, and these new services are vying for a bigger portion of the spending pie.

Safety concerns may be the reason business travelers have been slow to use the new services for rides and accommodations. Just 7 percent of business travelers reported feeling safer riding with Uber rather than in a taxi, On Call says. Only 2 percent of survey respondents felt that lodging booked through Airbnb was safer than traditional hotel accommodations.

But as these services become more commonplace, a growing number of business travelers have come to believe these services are no less safe than their traditional competitors, On Call says.

Uber, with 160,000 active drivers providing ride-share services in more than 150 North American cities, is growing in acceptance. [Airbnb](#) allows travelers to book overnight accommodations in personal residences in 34,000 cities and 190 countries worldwide.

A recent [survey by Certify](#), which processes travel expenses for thousands of businesses, says Uber in the second quarter of 2015 comprised 55 percent of ground transportation receipts, compared with taxis at 43 percent. Airbnb receipts remained small, Certify says, but grew 143 percent over the first quarter.

While the advent of sharing services offers travelers new options for comfort and savings, they also raise the possibility of different risks, according to On Call.

“Employers should absolutely have a policy in place for employees who choose to use sharing economy services like Uber and Airbnb,” said Jim Hutton, chief security officer for On Call International. “Related safety precautions need to be communicated to employees before they begin traveling, and should be reviewed as new services enter the market and current ones are updated.”

[FierceCIO suggests](#) privacy, rather than security, is an issue for ride services. To use Uber, you need an app and an account that includes your name and a credit card. Taxi drivers still take cash and don’t necessarily keep your name connected to a destination in a database.