

AirSafe.com Baggage and Security Guide

By Todd Curtis

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How to Use This Book

Two of the biggest and most common kinds of frustrations that passengers face almost every time they go to the airport revolve around baggage and security. Whether it's about what is allowed or prohibited on the aircraft, or what kinds of identification you need at the airport, there are always too many rules for any passenger to remember.

Since 1996, AirSafe.com has provided the public with insights and advice about a wide range of airline topics on its web sites, blogs, podcasts, and downloadable documents, and many of the most popular topics are included in this ebook.

This ebook puts a lot of useful information in one convenient place. Combining information from the AirSafe.com network of web sites, this book covers the following areas:

- * Things you should not bring on board
- * Advice for checked and carry-on baggage
- * Dealing with lost or delayed luggage
- * Travel with children or pets
- * Security and identification requirements
- * Advice for special travel situations
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The best way to find useful information in this book is to go to the table of contents and click on the appropriate link for the information that you want. There is a link to the table of contents at the end of every section. Also, there may be other links in the ebook that may take you to a variety of online information and resources.

Using the Table of Contents

Because this Guide is meant to be used as a reference, the best way to read it is to use the table of contents as you would use the home page of a web site and follow the links to the section of your choice. The table of contents is divided into subject areas based on the information in the individual sections. At the end of each section is a link to the table of contents, so when you finish reading a section, you can either read the following section or you can follow the link back to the table of contents.

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Every effort has been made to make this work as accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes both typographical and in content. Therefore, this text should be used only as a general guide on the subject matters covered. Furthermore, the information contained in this work was current only up to the publishing date.

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Basic Baggage and Security Advice

Only the rare passenger flies without carrying at least one piece of carry-on baggage, and many have to check one or more pieces of luggage as well. While there is always the risk of having items lost, misplaced, stolen, or damaged, many of the common risks can be reduced, avoided, or eliminated with a little bit of planning. The following pieces of advice provide some basic information on how to deal with many of the more common baggage related issues.

General baggage advice

There are only a few basic things to always avoid when it comes to either carry-on bags or checked luggage, mostly having to do with prohibited items. There are the obvious items that you should never pack such as illegal drugs or explosive devices. However, most other items that you should not pack are not so obvious, especially items that may be allowed in checked bags but not in carry-on bags.

Baggage limits

In general, airlines allow you to bring without additional charge up to two pieces of carry-on baggage (one of which can fit under your seat), plus some additional items such as umbrellas, and baby strollers. Additional baggage may cost you extra. Typically, you have to check in at least 30 minutes prior to departure for domestic flights in order to ensure that your checked luggage ends up on your airplane. Your airline may have more restrictive rules on check in time, especially for international flights. When in doubt, contact your airline for its specific baggage policies.

Identify your baggage

You should clearly identify all of your baggage, both checked and carry-on bags. Identification should include your contact information on both the outside and inside of your bag. You should also put some kind of personalized identification on the outside like a ribbon or sticker to make it easier to spot in the baggage claim area. You should also do the same for any carry-on bag that is too big to fit under the seat, since in some cases your larger carry-on bag may be checked if there is no room in the overhead bins.

Know what you are carrying

Watch your bags while you are at the airport and don't accept packages from strangers. Be prepared to answer questions about who packed your bags and whether you might have left them unattended at any time. Think carefully and answer honestly--history has shown that criminals and terrorists use unwitting passengers to carry bombs or other dangerous items on board aircraft, either by tricking passengers into carrying packages or by simply slipping items into unwatched bags. If you have any doubts, say so.

Expect to have your bags searched

Both carry-on and checked bags are subject to being hand-searched, especially when airline security personnel cannot determine by X-ray the contents of a package. Leave gifts unwrapped until after you arrive at your destination. Airline security personnel will open it if X-rays are unable to identify the contents.

Allow extra time for special circumstances

During busy periods, or when traveling with young children or infants, or with elderly or

disabled passengers, arrive earlier than you usually would.

Keep your photo identification handy

If you do not have a photo ID, make sure you have two pieces of identification, one of which must be issued by a government authority. Minors are not required to have identification. Failure to have proper identification may result in additional security scrutiny. Some airlines may prohibit you from boarding without proper ID. For international flights, airlines are required to collect your full name and ask you for a contact name and phone number.

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Basic Carry-on Baggage Advice

A reasonable approach to carry-on baggage is to keep in mind three things: think small, think smart, and think safe. Keep in mind the following points when you pack and you will likely avoid any problems with your carry-on baggage while you are on the aircraft.

Think small

- * The maximum size carry-on bag for most airlines is 45 linear inches (the total of the height, width, and depth of the bag). Anything larger should be checked.
- * No oversize packages or luggage can be stowed onboard.
- * Stow only your essentials (such as prescriptions, personal hygiene items, passports and other documentation) and valuable items, such as jewelry or cameras, in your carry-on bag.

Think smart

- * Plan to check more of your baggage and carry less with you in the cabin.
- * Check with your airline before packing to determine its carry-on guidelines regarding the number of items you may carry and the maximum size of those items.
- * In certain situations the airline may require most or even all of your bags to be checked, even your carry-on bag, so be prepared to have all your valuable or necessary items in a bag small enough to fit under the seat.
- * Put contact information on or inside your carry-on so if the airline has you check it at the last minute you will be able to identify the bag after you arrive, or will help the airline find it if the bag gets lost or delayed.

Think safe

- * Carry-on items that may fall from overhead bins can injure you or other passengers during flight or in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- * Stow heavy items under the seat in front of you, not overhead.
- * Don't stack items in the overhead storage bin.
- * If an emergency evacuation is necessary, leave your carry-on items on the plane.
- * Remember, be safety conscious when stowing your carry-on items.

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Reducing Carry-on Baggage Risks

If you are traveling with carry-on baggage, especially if you have no checked baggage, there are a few things you should do to avoid most of the problems you may have:

Prepare to have it searched - Before you get to the airplane, you have to go through airport security, and that means putting your bag through the x-ray machine, and having the bag opened up and inspected by airport security.

Know what's allowed in the cabin - There are many rules about what is allowed in the aircraft in your carry-on baggage. Review the descriptions of hazardous and prohibited items elsewhere in this ebook, and also review the rules your particular airline may have.

Keep track of your bags - In the terminal, especially in the areas beyond the security screener checkpoints, unattended baggage may be confiscated or even destroyed by airport security.

Prepare to have it checked - If your airplane runs out of room in the overhead storage compartment, your airline may check your bag at the last minute. Keep critical items like medicine and eyeglasses and valuable items like jewelry and cash in a separate small bag or pouch. If you are forced to check your carry-on, take out this small pouch and keep it with you.

Don't overpack the bag - Make sure your bag is light enough for you or someone else to easily lift it and put it in the overhead bin. Also, be extra careful if there is a heavy carry-on bag in a bin over your head. The doors on these bins may come open in flight, and heavy carry-ons can cause a serious head injury if one falls on your head.

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Reducing Checked Luggage Risks

Any time that you fly with checked luggage, you run the risk of having individual items or even the entire bag stolen, lost, damaged, or delayed. Statistics supplied by the US Department of Transportation imply that a passenger who checks luggage has about a 2% chance of having this problem on a typical round trip. For the average traveler, this means that having a checked bag lost, delayed, stolen, or damaged will be more than a once in a lifetime experience.

In order to reduce or eliminate many checked luggage risks, you should consider doing the following:

Only use carry-on bags - Avoiding checked luggage reduces the time spent at the airport and also reduces the chance that your belongings are lost, stolen, or damaged. Airlines us

Eliminate potential luggage snags - Since checked luggage usually goes through some kind of mechanical conveyor system, you should also remove straps or other protrusions that could get caught in the system.

Make your checked bags easy to inspect - In the US, the TSA has to be able to inspect a checked bag, so your bag should remain unlocked. There are exceptions to this rule. The TSA works with some lock manufacturers to provide screeners with keys for some models of locks. Check with the TSA at www.TSA.gov for details.

Make sure that your checked is bag easy to identify - To reduce the chance of someone accidentally taking your bag from the baggage claim area, place an identification tag of some kind on each piece of checked luggage. Make sure that your contact information is also on each one of these tags. You may also want to use small ribbons, stickers, or other identifying marks on the bag to make it easier to spot.

Check the airline luggage tags - At check in, make sure that tags that the gate agent attaches to each piece of checked luggage matches your baggage claim tickets. Also, ensure that you and your bag are going to the same destination airport.

Put valuables and critical items in your carry-on bags - Cash, financial documents, jewelry, cameras, cell phones, portable electronic devices, and other valuables should be kept on your person or in your carry-on bags. Other kinds of critical or difficult to replace items that should be in your carry-ons include things like prescription drugs, other medical items, eyeglasses, keys, passports, travel vouchers, business papers, manuscripts, heirlooms, or favorite toys. While the airline may compensate you for the loss of some items, they will not compensate you for the loss of some kinds of valuables such as money, and jewelry.

Keep fragile items out of checked luggage - Such items should be in your carry-on bags. Even a properly packed fragile item may be at risk in your checked luggage if that item has to be unwrapped in order to be inspected.

Keep camera film out of checked bags - In the US, the equipment used to scan checked bags may damage unexposed film. According to the TSA, film that goes through the x-ray screening device for carry-on items should be safe. However, you may want to request a hand inspection of any bag carrying film since multiple passes

through even these x-ray machines may damage undeveloped film.

Prepare for a lost, stolen, damaged, or delayed checked bag - Pack your carry-on bags so that you will be able to survive for 48 hours at your destination without your checked bags. If you are checking more than one piece of luggage, distribute items so that the loss of one bag will not cause undue hardship. Checked bags that are delayed usually arrive within a day or so. Be prepared to keep a record of any costs related to your delayed or missing bag, or to any damage to the bag or contents so that you can later submit a claim to the airline or to the TSA.

Check your bags after arrival - Go through your checked luggage after arrival to see if anything is damaged or missing, or if extra items were placed in the bag. If there is a problem, make sure you contact your airline as soon as possible. When you get your bag at your destination, make sure that the number or other identifying information on your claim ticket matches the information on your bag.

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Things You Should Never Put in Checked Baggage

There are many items that are not hazardous or prohibited that you can carry either in checked baggage, in carry-on baggage, or on your person. However, if it is an item that is hard to replace, very expensive, or necessary for your health and well being, then you should never put it in checked baggage:

Money related items: Cash, credit cards, travelers checks, blank checkbooks, securities, and anything else that has monetary value or should either be on your person or in your carry-on baggage. If you lose money-related items in your checked baggage, airlines are not obligated to compensate you.

Jewelry: Necklaces, rings, diamonds, other precious stones, gold, silver, other precious metals, expensive watches, and other small and valuable items like these should also stay out of checked baggage. Like the situation with money, the airline isn't obligated to compensate you for the loss.

Laptops and electronic devices: Laptops, cell phones, and other small personal electronic devices should remain on your person or in your carry-on bags.

Medically related items: Prescription medication, other medications, and other medical items should remain with you in the cabin.

Other items: If it is small and valuable, or if replacing it would be difficult or expensive, then keep it with you in the cabin. Examples include passports and other identification, keys, eyeglasses, photos, exposed film, tickets, art, boarding passes, travel vouchers, mail, financial records, business documents, manuscripts, heirlooms, collectible items, favorite toys, portable data storage devices like flash drives, and software. If you have something else that is small and that you don't want to lose, keep it with you.

Last minute bag check

Sometimes on full or nearly full flights, the airplane may run out of room, and you may be forced to check your carry-on bag at the gate. You should pack your carry-on bag in a manner so that if it must be gate-checked, you can quickly remove the fragile, valuable and critical items and have them in a smaller bag that you can fit under a seat.

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Top 10 Baggage Tips

1. Travel with only carry-on luggage

By using only carry-on luggage, you do not risk having checked luggage lost or stolen.

2. Do not put heavy items in the overhead storage bins.

While the weight limit for carry-on items is generally about 40 lbs. (18.2 kg.), even a much lighter bag may cause severe injury if it falls out of the bin. For more information, refer to the AirSafe.com article [Head Injury Risk from Overhead Luggage](#).

3. Put your contact information inside and outside every bag.

In addition to this information, you should also put a copy of your itinerary inside every bag to make it easier for the airline to reunite you if you are separated from your luggage. Do this with your carry-on bag in case you are forced to check that bag at the last minute. For personal security reasons, you may want to use an address other than your home address.

4. Customize the look of your bag to make it easy to identify.

Many bags on a flight may have a similar design, so customize the bag to make it easy to spot on a baggage carousel. This will keep other passengers from picking it up by mistake.

5. Keep valuable items with you.

Money, laptop computers, electronic files, and other items of high value or importance should be kept in a carry-on bag, preferably one that is small enough to stow under a seat. The airline may insist on checking larger carry-on bags if the overhead bins become filled.

6. Make sure that the airline tag on your checked luggage is for the correct destination.

Every piece of checked luggage should have a three-letter airport identifier that matches your destination airport. If you are unsure of the code, ask the ticket agent or skycap.

7. Make sure that you keep the stub from your checked luggage.

This stub is a critical document that will be needed if your luggage is lost by the airline or if you are trying to prove that you own a piece of luggage.

8. Immediately report the loss of checked luggage.

If your checked bag does not arrive at your destination, immediately report this problem to the baggage agent on duty or to any other available representative from your airline.

9. Prepare to deal with a lost checked bag.

Pack key items in your carryon bag like extra underwear or essential items for a business meeting so you can continue your trip if your checked bags are lost or delayed.

10. Don't pack hazardous goods.

There are quite a number of items or materials, some of them not so obvious, that may pose a risk if taken on an aircraft. Review the sections of this ebook that described allowed and prohibited goods for more details.

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Top 10 Baggage Claim Tips

If you have to check luggage, you will have to pick it up in the baggage claim area, sometimes called the baggage reclaim area in some airports outside the US. No matter where you are in the world, you face the same kind of problems like the airline losing or damaging your bag or someone stealing your luggage. If you follow the tips below, you can avoid most baggage claim problems.

1. Try to pack less

The easiest way to avoid baggage claim problems is to not have any checked bags. If you plan on checking two bags, and you find that you can travel with only one checked bag, than do so. If you can get by with just a carry-on bag, that would be an even better idea. In the US, most airlines allow you take one carry-on bag, and one smaller item that can be placed under your seat. Also, there are many exceptions to carry-on limits for things like baby strollers, medical devices, and child seats.

2. Make your bag easy to find

Many bags look alike, so to make it easy to find your bag quickly, do one or two things to the outside like tying a bright ribbon to a handle or putting a decal on the side.

3. Put your contact information on your bags and inside each bag

Many bags come with a tag with a little address card. Put your name and contact information. If you put an address, put one where you want the bag to be delivered. You many want to also put a phone number or email address where you can be reached when you are traveling. You may want to put the same information inside the bag as well.

4. Check the Information on the luggage tag

At the check in counter, when the airline puts their luggage tag on the bag, make sure that the information is correct. The most important pieces of information are the origin and destination airports, which are three-letter codes that will be in capital letters. If you don't know what they are for your departure and arrival airport, ask when you check in. Many tags will also have information about the flight number, and perhaps your name. Make sure that any identification number or other information on your bag's tag matches the information on your claim ticket.

5. Get to the baggage claim area before your bags do

After your plane gets to the gate, make your way to the baggage claim area. If you are in an unfamiliar airport with a large baggage claim area, there may be many baggage carousels. If you are not sure where to go, ask one of your airline's agents, or look for a baggage carousel board that lists which carousel will have your flight's bags. Even if you are the last person out of a crowded plane, you should be able to get to the baggage claim area ahead of your bags.

6. Get into position to grab your bag

By the time the baggage carousel starts and bags start to come out, there will likely be a crowd of people looking for bags. Because the baggage claim area is not in the secure part of the terminal, you may have to deal with many other people besides the passengers on your flight, including potential thieves. Don't be shy; get close to the carousel so you grab your bag the first time it comes by.

7. Keep off the baggage carousel

If you get to the carousel before the bags arrive, it may not be moving, and it may be tempting to either sit on the carousel or to let your child play on it. Don't do it. The machine can start at any time and without warning. The last thing you need to let a simple bag pickup turn into a medical emergency.

8. Check your tags before you leave the baggage claim area

After you collect all your bags, check the tags on your bags with your claim ticket. The information should match. If they don't check your bag more closely to make sure you picked up the wrong bag. If you did, put it back on the carousel. If you accidentally take someone else's bag away from the baggage claim area, you will be responsible for returning it either to the airline or the bag's owner. Also, check to see that the number of bags you have matches the number of claim tickets you have. At the end of a long flight, you may be tired and not thinking clearly, so count your bags before you go.

9. Prepare for a missing, damaged, or stolen bag

Sometimes bad things happen to your checked luggage even if you take reasonable precautions. A little bit of preparation can make finding a lost or stolen bag or getting compensation for a lost or damaged bag much easier. A few things that you can do include keeping receipts from when you purchased your bag or the items in the bag, taking pictures of the bag or its contents, and either remembering or writing down details like the color and size of the bag, the brand name, and anything that would help identify your bag.

10. Check your bag for damage before you leave

While airlines won't compensate you for broken wheels, minor scratches, missing handles, or other things that they consider to be normal wear and tear, if you have major damage to your bag that you think was caused by the airline, report it to the airline as soon as possible. It is best to do it before you leave the airport. If you file a claim, make sure that you follow the airline's procedures for making claim for lost or damaged luggage. You should also keep copies of any complaints you submit.

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Items Banned from Checked and Carry-on Baggage

In the US, both the TSA and the airlines have baggage rules and restrictions that will determine what you can bring on board the aircraft or into the secure area of the airport terminal. Most other countries have similar rules about what is allowed and not allowed. Because airline rules and security threats may change at any time, you should check with your airline if you have any questions about any rule changes, or about a particular item that you may want to bring on board.

The following items are completely banned from aircraft, and should not be brought to the airport:

Explosive and incendiary materials: Gunpowder (including black powder and percussion caps), dynamite, blasting caps, fireworks, flares, plastic explosives, grenades, replicas of incendiary devices, and replicas of plastic explosives.

Flammable items: Gasoline, gas torches, lighter fluid, cooking fuel, other types of flammable liquid fuel, flammable paints, paint thinner, turpentine, aerosols (exceptions for personal care items, toiletries, or medically related items).

Gases and pressure containers: Aerosols (with the exception of personal care items or toiletries in limited quantities in containers sized 3.4 fluid ounces or smaller), carbon dioxide cartridges, oxygen tanks (scuba or medical), mace, tear gas, pepper spray, self-inflating rafts, and deeply refrigerated gases such as liquid nitrogen.

Poisons: Weed killers, pesticides, insecticides, rodent poisons, arsenic, and cyanides.

Matches: All matches are banned from checked baggage, and strike-anywhere matches are banned completely from aircraft, but you can have a single book of safety (non-strike anywhere) matches with you in the passenger cabin.

Oxidizers and organic peroxides: Bleach, nitric acid, fertilizers, swimming pool or spa chemicals, and fiberglass repair kits.

Poisons: Weed killers, pesticides, insecticides, rodent poisons, arsenic, and cyanides.

Infectious Materials: Medical laboratory specimens, viral organisms, and bacterial cultures.

Corrosives: Drain cleaners, car batteries, wet cell batteries, acids, alkalis, lye, and mercury.

Organics: Fiberglass resins, peroxides.

Radioactive materials: There are some exceptions for implanted radioactive medical devices. Contact your airline for details on how to ship other radioactive materials.

Magnetic materials: Strong magnets such as those in some loudspeakers and laboratory equipment.

Other dangerous items: Tear gas, spray paint, swimming pool or spa chlorine, cylinders with compressed gas, and torch lighters.

Note: If you are in any doubt about whether your item may be hazardous, you should bring it to the attention of either your airline or the security screener.

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Items Allowed Only in Checked Baggage

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has prohibited the following items from airplane cabins and carry-on baggage, but they may (with some exceptions) be carried as checked baggage:

Sporting goods: Bats (baseball, softball, cricket), hockey sticks, lacrosse sticks, bows and arrows, ski poles and spear guns golf clubs, and pool cues.

Knives: Knives of any length, composition or description (except for plastic or round bladed butter knives), swords, machetes, and martial arts weapons such as throwing stars.

Cutting instruments: Carpet knives and box cutters (and spare blades), any device with a folding or retractable blade, ice picks, straight razors, and metal scissors with pointed tips, are only allowed in checked baggage. Small scissors with a cutting edge less than four inches (10 cm) are allowed in the cabin.

Firearms: Pistols, flare guns, BB guns, rifles, and other firearms must be unloaded, packed in a locked hard-sided container, and declared to the airline at check-in. There are limited exceptions to the firearms and ammunition rules for law enforcement officers. In the United States, federal laws apply to aircraft and to the secure areas of the airport such as the gate areas. State or local laws concerning the carrying of concealed or unconcealed weapons do not apply. Attempting to enter the secure area of the terminal with weapons, even accidentally, may lead to your arrest.

Firearm replicas: Realistic replicas of firearms must be carried as checked baggage. Toy weapons that are not realistic are allowed in checked or carry-on baggage.

Firearm parts: They should be treated like firearms and only carried in checked baggage.

Ammunition: In the US, small arms ammunitions for personal use must also be declared to the airline at check-in, and must be securely packed in fiber, wood or metal boxes or other packaging specifically designed to carry small amounts of ammunition. Ammunition, if properly packaged, can also be carried in the same hard-sided case as an unloaded firearm. You should check with the airline to see if it has additional restrictions on either firearms or ammunition.

Paintball guns: Compressed air guns, including paintball guns, may be carried in checked luggage without the compressed air cylinder attached. Compressed gas cylinders are not allowed on aircraft.

Tools: Tools greater than seven inches in length can only be carried as checked baggage. Also, power tools such as drills should also be in checked baggage. Shorter tools, such as wrenches, screwdrivers, and pliers, may be carried in carry-on baggage. Any tool with a sharp or cutting edge like a hand saw, box cutter, or drill bit are also limited to checked baggage. If you have a toolbox in checked baggage, make sure you check every compartment to make sure that your toolbox does not have any containers with flammable liquids, utility lighters, micro torches, or other banned items. Larger equipment like a stepladder or circular saw should be checked.

Dry ice (frozen carbon dioxide): Up to four pounds (1.8 kg) may be carried on board

for packing perishables, providing the package is vented.

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Restrictions on Liquids, Gels, and Aerosols

In August 2006, authorities in the United Kingdom uncovered an alleged plot to sabotage as many as 10 US airliners traveling from the United Kingdom to the United States, reportedly by using liquid and gel based explosives. Since then, the US and most other countries have restricted what liquids and gels a passenger may have in the passenger cabin: In the US, the general TSA restrictions are as follows:

Liquid and gel products

Passengers may bring into the secure area of the airport liquid and gel products, so long as each individual container has a capacity of no greater than 3.4 fluid ounces (100 ml), and all of these small containers can fit in quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag. The TSA suggestion for a zip-top is a loose requirement. If you only have a few small containers, you don't need an additional zip-top bag.

Snow globes

Snow globes and similar liquid-filled decorations, no matter what size, can only be carried in checked luggage.

Exemptions on Liquid and gel products

Passengers may not pass through the security screening with gel or beverage containers of greater capacity unless they fall under one of the exemptions described below:

Purchased after screening: Once a passenger has passed through security screening, they can purchase any size beverage and other liquid or gel products in the terminal and take them on to the plane.

Prescription and over the counter drugs: All prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications including insulin and other diabetes related supplies, petroleum jelly, K-Y jelly, eye drops, and saline solution.

Disabled passengers: Liquids including water, juice, or liquid nutrition or gels for passengers with a disability or medical condition.

Life-support and life-sustaining liquids: Items such as bone marrow, blood products, and transplant organs fit into this category. Frozen gels or liquids are permitted if required to cool medical and infant/child exemptions. Ice is permitted as long as there is no melted liquid present

Certain prosthetic devices: Items used to augment the body for medical or cosmetic reasons such as mastectomy products, prosthetic breasts, bras or shells containing gels, saline solution, or other liquids.

Infants and small children: Baby formula, breast milk, juice or water is allowed for a traveling infant small child. Breast milk is in the same category as liquid medications. A mother flying without her child should be able to bring breast milk through the checkpoint, provided it is declared prior to screening.

Cosmetic and hygiene items: Solid cosmetics and personal hygiene items such as lipstick in a tube, solid deodorant, lip balm and similar solids are allowed. Please remember these items must be solid and not in liquid, gel or aerosol form.

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Dangerous Items Allowed in the Passenger Cabin

There are a number of items that you may consider to be hazardous or dangerous, but that are actually allowed in the passenger cabin by the TSA, including the following:

Small hand tools: Most hand tools that are less than seven inches (18 cm) in length and that don't have sharp cutting edges can be taken into the passenger cabin. This would include tools like wrenches, screwdrivers, and pliers.

Scissors - Metal scissors, even the ones with pointed tips and blades, are allowed in the passenger cabin so long as the blades shorter than four inches

Paint - Non-flammable liquid, gel, or aerosol paint containers are allowed, so long as the container has a capacity of less than 3.4 ounces (100ml).

Matches and lighters: You can have a single book of safety (non-strike anywhere) matches with you in the passenger cabin, either on your person or in your carry-on baggage. You can have a common lighter with you on your person or in your carry-on baggage. In the US, lighters with fuel are prohibited in checked baggage, unless they adhere to the Department of Transportation (DOT) exemption, which allows up to two fueled lighters if properly enclosed in a DOT approved case.

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Special Rules on Batteries

The FAA allows passengers to carry most consumer batteries and personal battery-powered devices. Spare batteries must be protected from damage and short-circuiting. Battery-powered devices also should be protected from accidental activation. Some batteries have further restrictions, and those are summarized below, and you can find more details in an FAA brochure on the subject.

Batteries allowed only in carry-on baggage

- * Common dry cell alkaline batteries such as AA, AAA, C, D, 9-volt, and button sized cells.
- * Dry cell rechargeable batteries such as Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) and Nickel Cadmium (NiCad).
- * Small, rechargeable lithium ion batteries of the types commonly used in a cell phone, PDA, camera, camcorder, handheld video game, or standard laptop computer.
- * Small, non-rechargeable lithium metal batteries commonly used with cameras and other small personal electronics.

Batteries allowed in checked baggage

Except for spare (uninstalled) lithium batteries, all the batteries allowed in carry-on baggage are also allowed in checked baggage. Batteries in checked luggage must be protected from damage and short-circuiting, or installed in a device. Battery-powered devices, particularly those with moving parts or those that could heat up, should be protected from accidental activation.

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Identification Requirements

For domestic US travel, an unexpired passport or other government-issued photo ID (national, state, or local) is required for travelers age 18 and over. This ID must contain the following: name, date of birth, gender, expiration date and a tamper-resistant feature in order for a passenger to be allowed to go through the checkpoint.

Acceptable forms of ID

The TSA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has an extensive list of acceptable ID for domestic flights in the US, including common forms of identification such as drivers licenses or a state issued ID card:

- * US passport
- * US passport card
- * DHS "Trusted Traveler" cards (NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST)
- * US Military ID (active duty or retired military and their dependents, and DOD civilians)
- * Permanent Resident Card
- * Border Crossing Card
- * DHS-designated enhanced driver's license
- * Drivers Licenses or other state photo identity cards issued by Department of Motor Vehicles (or equivalent)
- * Native American Tribal Photo ID
- * Airline or airport-issued ID (if issued under a TSA-approved security plan)
- * Passport issued by a national government
- * Canadian provincial driver's license or Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) card
- * Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC)

Citizens of countries other than the US or Canada are not required to carry their passports if they have documents issued by the US government such as Permanent Resident Cards. Those who do not should be carrying their passports while visiting the US.

Unacceptable forms of ID

Examples of types of ID, even if they are photo IDs, that are not accepted include the following:

- * Employee badge
- * School or University ID card
- * Credit or Debit card
- * Library card

What if you don't have an acceptable ID?

You may still be allowed to fly if you don't have an acceptable ID, though you should allow extra time for the TSA to use an alternative method of identification. Bring any ID or documents they have available to assist in verification of identity. Passengers need at least two alternate forms of identification, such as a social security card, birth certificate, marriage license, or credit card. The documents must bear the name of the passenger. Also, one of these documents must bear identification information containing one of the

following: date of birth, gender, address, or photo. If TSA can confirm your identity, they may be allowed to enter the secured part of the airport terminal area, but you may be subject to additional screening.

International travel

In most cases, international travelers of any age will need to have a valid passport, and depending on the country a visa. Some countries, including the US and Canada, may have agreements that allow travelers to use passport alternatives. Check with your airline or with the appropriate government office to find out what your identification and visa requirements you have to follow.

Tickets and boarding passes

In the US, to enter the secure area of the airport, including the boarding areas, most passengers will have to have both an acceptable form of identification and either a ticket or a boarding pass. Many travelers use electronic tickets, and those travelers will have to have a boarding pass before entering the security checkpoint. In many cases, if you don't have any checked baggage you can print out your boarding pass before getting to the airport or at a special kiosk at the airport. If you have checked bags, you can get your boarding pass at the check-in counter.

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The Security Screening Process

The basic screening process at US airports is similar to what you would find in most parts of the world. Most security screening locations will have a walk-through metal detector and an x-ray scanner for carry-on bags, shoes, and other items. The following is also true for most screening locations in the US:

- * Only ticketed passengers are allowed beyond the security checkpoints, except for those who may be assisting or escorting another passenger, and who have permission to do so.
- * If you have a laptop or other large electronic item like a video game console, you will have to take them out of any bag or container and have them screened separately.
- * Smaller electronic items, such as cell phones and iPods, may be subjected to additional screening.
- * If you are carrying gifts, keep them unwrapped so security screeners can inspect the contents of the box or package.
- * You should remove as much metal from your pockets and your body as you can. Security screeners have to identify any metal that is detected at the checkpoint. If you set off the alarm, you will undergo additional screening that may include use of a hand-held metal detector and pat-down search. Items that may set off the metal detectors include keys, loose change, cell phones and other personal electronic devices, jewelry, metal body piercings, and buttons or other clothing fasteners made out of metal.
- * If you are carrying undeveloped film, you can keep it in your carry-on bag and allow the film to go through the x-ray machine. If your film speed is faster than ASA 800 you may ask one of the security personnel to physically inspect your film to avoid having the film x-rayed.
- * Travelers in most cases are required to remove their shoes before entering the walk-through metal detector at all US airports and put them through the x-ray machine for inspection.
- * If you set off the metal detectors or if the screeners see something suspicious in the x-ray machine, you may be asked to go to a separate area for additional screening.
- * If you try to take prohibited items through the screening checkpoint, you may not be allowed to proceed into the secure area unless you either dispose of that item or place that item in your checked luggage.

Note on head coverings and loose clothing

All members of the traveling public are permitted to wear head coverings (whether religious or not) through the security checkpoints. You may be directed to additional screening if your headwear or clothing (religious or otherwise) is loose fitting or large enough to hide prohibited items. If any security concern cannot be resolved through a pat-down search, you may be offered the opportunity to remove the head covering in a private screening area. For more information on TSA accommodations for religious and cultural needs, [click here](#).

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Top 10 Security Questions

1. What kind of identification do I need to fly?

In the US, there are several kinds of identification that you have to supply to the airlines or to the TSA. When you buy your ticket, you have to provide your name, gender, and date of birth to the airline, and that information must match the information on your approved ID. When you get to the airport, you have to provide the TSA with your boarding pass, as well as an approved ID if you are over 18 if you are over 18. For international trips, every passenger, even babies, must have a passport.

2. Can I fly without an approved identification?

Yes, but only under certain conditions. For domestic US flights, children under the age of 18 can fly without a TSA approved ID. All adult passengers (age 18 and over) are required to show a valid US federal or state-issued photo ID that contains their name, date of birth, gender, and that has an expiration date. A complete list of approved IDs is in the [Identification Requirements](#) section.

3. What kind of identification does a child need?

For domestic flights, children from age two to 17 only need a boarding pass. Children under the age of two who are traveling as a lap child will require a boarding verification document from the airline, but do not need either a boarding pass or an ID. If you are traveling with a child under two and have purchased a ticket so that your child can occupy a seat, your child will need to have a boarding pass. For international travel, children of all ages will have to have a passport in addition to a boarding pass or boarding verification document.

4. Should unaccompanied children fly without an ID?

For international flights, they will have to have a passport regardless of their age. Although it is not required for domestic flights, if your child happens to have some kind of ID, even if it is not on the TSA list of approved IDs, your child should carry it.

5. What do I do if I don't have an approved ID?

If you have never acquired an approved ID, or if your ID is expired or missing, you do have some options if you are taking a domestic flight. The TSA will allow you to go through security if they can positively identify you with alternative identification documents. The TSA will need at least two alternate forms of identification, such as a social security card, birth certificate, marriage license, or credit card. The documents must include your name. Also, at least one of your documents must contain at least one of the following: date of birth, gender, address, or photo. If TSA can confirm your identity, they may enter the secured area, but they could be subject to additional screening. If you are on an international flight but don't have your passport or visa, even if you can get past the TSA, you may have trouble leaving the US or entering your destination country.

6. Are the TSA screening machines safe?

TSA uses several different kinds of screening technology for people and baggage. For carry-on items and checked luggage, the TSA uses x-ray machines that may damage very sensitive camera film, but otherwise has no lasting effects on your belongings. For screening people, the two most common devices are metal detectors, which give off

electromagnetic radiation, and full-body explosives detection scanners. The scanners use one of two technologies, one based on x-rays and another based on high frequency radio waves. While the TSA claims that the level of radiation used is very low and that these devices are safe, any kind of radiation exposure carries some risk, and it is unclear if that risk will result in any long-term health effects such as cancer.

7. Do I have to use the full-body scanner?

The full-body scanners, which produce an image that shows if a passenger is concealing explosives, weapons, or other dangerous items, is a secondary screening technology. If a passenger does not want to use that device, you will have to allow the TSA to perform a pat-down search before you are allowed to enter the secure area of the airport.

8. Why does TSA have to do pat-down searches?

The TSA uses a variety of methods to prevent hazardous and prohibited items from getting onto aircraft, and physical searches are one of those methods. Pat-downs are used if a passenger triggers an alarm on one of the metal detectors or full-body scanners, or if a passenger does not want to use the full-body scanner.

9. What if the name on my boarding pass does not exactly match the name on my identification?

If there is only a small difference between your boarding pass and ID, for example a missing middle initial, you should not have a problem. There might also be small differences caused by the boarding pass printing practices of individual airlines. However, if the TSA can't authenticate your identification, you may not be allowed to get on your plane.

10. How do I check if I am on the no-fly list?

The TSA uses a number of databases and watch lists to prevent selected individuals off of airplanes, or to identify individuals for additional screening. You can't check to see if you are on one of these lists. You will not know until you are told by either your airline or TSA. If you are on the no-fly list, you will likely not be allowed to get on your aircraft. If you are on one of the other watch lists, you may be delayed because of additional screening. If you are on one of these watch lists because of a mistake, for example because you have a similar name to someone in the database, you may have to contact the Department of Homeland Security to resolve this problem.

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Cabin Safety Tips

When you travel by air, what you do before you show up at the airport does a lot to help you avoid any problems during the flight. You don't have to make any major changes in your flying habits, you just have to pay attention to your situation and be ready to do basic things like put on your seatbelt if asked by the flight attendant.

Before the flight

- * Don't pack banned or restricted items.
- * Listen to the pre-flight safety briefing.
- * Read the safety data card in the seat pocket in front of you.
- * When in your seat, keep your seat belt on.
- * Once you reach your seat, locate the closest emergency exit in front and behind you, and then count the seat rows to reach those emergency exits. This will be very helpful in case of an emergency evacuation.

What to wear to reduce your risks

In the unlikely event of an airplane evacuation via escape slides, synthetic fibers can become very hot due to friction, and melt causing first, second and even third degree burns to the body and legs. The following steps should be taken when traveling to ensure passenger comfort and safety:

Wear clothes made of natural fibers such as cotton, wool, denim, and leather -

These fibers offer the best protection during an airplane evacuation or fire. Synthetics such as rayon, polyester, and nylon (especially in hosiery) can melt when heated.

Wear clothing that is roomy and comfortable

Wear long pants and long sleeves - Avoid wearing shorts or skirts since these types of clothes do not appropriately cover extremities.

Wear low-heeled laced or strapped shoes, boots, or tennis shoes - Shoes made of leather or canvas are preferable. High-heeled shoes will have to be removed before leaving the airplane via an escape slide. This will slow your departure from the airplane and put you at risk for severe injury from possible hazards such as broken glass, or metal debris. Avoid wearing sandals for the same reasons.

How to behave in the cabin

Once you are flying, you can do other things to keep yourself safe and to reduce your stress, and the stress felt by those around you:

Limit your alcohol consumption - This makes it less likely that you will get involved in an air rage related intoxication incident.

Stay away from overloaded luggage bins - study of airline passenger injuries from overhead luggage. Bags falling from overhead luggage bins can cause serious injuries, so avoid putting a heavy bag in the bin above you. If someone else tries to put a heavy bag above you, either move the bag or move yourself.

Use your electronic entertainment with care - If you have a personal entertainment device to play music or movies, wear headphones to cut down on noise pollution, and

think twice about playing a movie if it may be disturbing to your neighbors.

Get up and walk around if you can - On longer flights, you should make an effort to get up and move around once in a while. This may help you to prevent deep vein thrombosis (DVT), which is the development of a blood clot in your veins. Avoid wearing shorts or skirts since these types of clothes do not appropriately cover extremities.

If you see something suspicious tell someone - While there is very little chance than anyone will deliberately try to hijack or sabotage your airplane, if you see suspicious activity before or during your flight, including suspicious packages, tell someone. If you are at the airport, tell an airline representative or a security officer. If you are in the air, contact a flight attendant.

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Turbulence Risks to Airline Passengers

Turbulence happens on just about every flight, but most of the time the amount of turbulence is very small, and the level of risk is very low. In those rare cases where the turbulence is severe, any passenger who is not buckled up can be seriously injured. The following insights and advice should keep you from becoming one of those statistics.

Airline turbulence basics

You can experience turbulence for many reasons, typically due to weather conditions such as thunderstorms. Severe turbulence can happen in any phase of flight, but it's most likely to be hazardous during cruise when passengers and crew may be out of their seats and not belted in. In most cases a passenger experiencing turbulence will feel nothing more than a slight vibration. At the other extreme are those rare events that are severe enough to throw passengers around the cabin.

Injuries from overhead baggage

Passengers are at risk of injury from falling debris during turbulence, as well as during other events like hard landings. A [mid-1990s study of airline passenger injuries from overhead luggage](#) published by the Flight Safety Foundation surveyed airlines showed that an estimated 10,000 passengers were injured each year by falling luggage.

Passengers sustained injuries ranging from bruises to lacerations to severe head trauma. Sometimes those suffering head trauma may not show symptoms for several hours or days, and the effects of the trauma may linger for several months.

Deaths and injuries from air turbulence

While fatalities are rare, they do happen. Since 1980, AirSafe.com has identified [six fatal turbulence accidents](#) where at least one passenger was killed on a jet airliner. Less severe injuries are more common. For example, during the seven-year period 2003-2009, the NTSB identified 80 turbulence events on airliners that involved a serious injury to at least one person on the aircraft.

Reducing your risks from turbulence

When the flight crew expects turbulence, they will work with the cabin crew to make sure that passengers are in their seats and belted in, and that serving carts and other loose items are properly secured. Even when turbulence is not expected, you should take a few basics steps before and during the flight to ensure your safety:

Follow the instructions of the crew - If the crew suggests that passengers return to their seats, do so as soon as you can.

Wear your seat belt at all times - Turbulence events can happen even during a smooth flight on a cloudless day. Turbulence is not always predictable and may arrive without warning.

Be aware of your overhead bin - Avoid sitting under a bin that is heavily packed or that contains one or more heavy items. If you can, move to a seat that is not directly under a bin.

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## **Passenger Risks of Deep Vein Thrombosis**

One of the risks that passengers face, especially on long flights, is a circulation related disease called deep vein thrombosis. The Observer newspaper of the U.K. published a number of articles in January 2001 that among other things claimed that major airlines have been aware of the problem for some time. The paper also estimated that DVT could be causing up to 300 deaths per year in the U.K. from flight-related blood clots. Deep vein thrombosis, sometimes referred to as "economy class syndrome" when it occurs to airline passengers, is a risk that is faced by airline passengers on long flights. The following information provides a brief overview of the problem and advice on how to avoid this risk.

### **What is deep vein thrombosis?**

Deep vein thrombosis is a condition where a thrombus or blood clot forms within a deep vein, typically one in the thigh or the calf. This blood clot can either partially or completely block the flow of blood in the vein. In extreme cases, this clot can break free from a vein wall and travel to the lung and block an artery. This pulmonary embolism could lead to serious injury or death. In pregnant women, this kind of embolism could lodge in the placenta and put the fetus at risk.

### **How do you get deep vein thrombosis?**

Deep vein thrombosis is a problem that is caused by pooling of blood in the vein, which triggers blood-clotting mechanisms. Anyone who sits for long periods of time in a vehicle, movie theater, or even an office desk may develop clumps of clotted blood in the legs. Airline passengers in coach seating are particularly vulnerable because of the sometimes dense seating and limited ability to get up and move around. However, even passengers in business and first class are at risk.

### **What is the extent of the problem?**

Precise figures are difficult to estimate since there are no national or international regulations that require that such cases be tracked. While a search of the online FAA and NTSB incident and accident records reveal no records mentioning a thrombosis event involving a passenger death due to DVT, passenger deaths have been reported on occasion by various news organizations.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Symptoms may vary widely. A mild case may have no symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they could include the following:

- \* Tenderness and redness in the affected area,
- \* Pain and swelling in areas near the blood clot,
- \* Fever,
- \* Cramps,
- \* Rapid heartbeat,
- \* Sudden, unexplained cough, and
- \* Joint pain and soreness.

### **Are you at risk?**

If you have at least one of the following conditions, you may be at higher risk:

- \* Over the age of 60,
- \* Recent accident, surgery, or other trauma,
- \* Coronary artery disease,
- \* Smoking,
- \* Pregnancy,
- \* Obesity,
- \* Use of oral contraceptives,
- \* Family history of clotting problems

**What can you do about it?**

There are several things that you can do to reduce your risk:

- \* Wear clothing that may help your circulation
- \* Get up and move around at least once an hour,
- \* If you have to remain seated, flex your ankles and move your feet,
- \* Drink plenty of water before and during the flight,
- \* Limit your in-flight alcohol consumption, and
- \* Seek medical advice before traveling if you feel that you are at risk.

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## **Air Travel Advice for Diabetics**

Air travelers with diabetes have to take extra precautions to deal with issues that may come up during a flight. The following diabetes travel advice will help you avoid most of the potential problems you may have.

### **Food and nutrition issues for diabetic air travelers**

You should follow your meal plan as closely as possible. Most flights, even those that may be three or four hours long, typically don't offer inflight meals, so you may have to pack a meal and snacks to eat during the flight. If your flight does have meals, request an appropriate special meal. Even if they serve meals on your flight, you should pack a snack with you in case you have to wait too long for your meal service.

### **Staying hydrated and avoiding alcohol**

You should take extra care to drink fluids (water, juice, etc.) while flying. Cabin air is drier than normal air, so you may feel a bit more thirst than usual. Remember that if you have a medical condition and you need to have water or other liquids close at hand, you should be able to get past airport security with no problem.

No matter what type of diabetes you have, consuming alcohol makes it harder to manage your condition. The best option is to not drink at all while flying. If you are allowed to drink, and you want to drink beer, wine, or other alcoholic beverages while traveling, ask your diabetes educator how much alcohol you can safely drink. Remember that the air inside the cabin has about as much oxygen as the air in a high altitude city like Denver, so any alcohol will affect you more. Also, remember to eat something when you drink to prevent low blood glucose.

### **Dress comfortably for your flight**

Air travel usually involves quite a bit of walking or standing while in the airport, and lots of sitting while flying. Wear clothes and shoes that will be easy on your body. Take comfortable, well-fitting shoes that are broken in and don't give your feet any problem. Your clothes should also be comfortable, and not cause any restrictions while you are sitting. If it is too hot or too cold in the cabin, talk to the flight attendant to see what can be done to make the situation better.

### **Get up and move around on long flights**

If you have poor circulation, for example feet that hurt or swell up after sitting too long, get up and move around, especially on longer flights. You may want to sit on or near an aisle to make it easier for you to get in and out of your seat. Some circulation related problems like deep vein thrombosis can affect even healthy passengers, so you may want to talk to your health provider about this risk before you fly.

### **Carry all your necessary diabetes medical supplies**

Carry your diabetes medicines and your blood testing supplies with you in a carry-on bag or some other bag that you keep with you in the cabin. Never put them in your checked baggage.

Don't count on buying extra supplies when you're traveling, especially if you're going to another country. Different countries use different kinds of diabetes medicines. If you're going to be away for a long time, ask your doctor for a written prescription for your

diabetes medicine and the name of a doctor in the place you're going to visit.

**Consult your health care professional**

You should consider talking to your doctor or other health care professional about how to adjust your medicines, especially your insulin, if you are taking a trip that will be a lot different from your normal routine. Let your health provider know if your trip will take you across several time zones, if you will be in a place with very different temperatures, or if you will have a lot more or a lot less physical activity than normal.

**Dealing with insulin while traveling**

To avoid problems from too much heat or too much cold, take a special insulated bag to carry your insulin to keep it from freezing or getting too hot.

Because items may get broken or damaged during travel, bring extra supplies for taking insulin and testing your blood glucose.

Plan for any special medical needs. Remember that if you need something for medical reasons, in most cases you will be allowed to take it with you in your carry-on baggage, even if it is one of the TSA prohibited items.

To help avoid possible problems with security personnel, ask your doctor for a letter saying that you have diabetes and need to carry supplies for taking insulin and testing blood glucose.

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## **Top 10 Airline Safety Tips**

While airline passengers have to deal with constant changes in airport security, airline baggage rules, and even in the kinds of items that are prohibited and restricted from airline flights, a lot of the basic common sense suggestions for flying safely and with minimum hassle haven't changed much at all.

### **1. Fly on nonstop routes**

Most airliner accidents happen during the takeoff, climb, descent, and landing phase of flight, so the easiest way to reduce your chance of getting in an accident is to take fewer flights. If you have a choice, and there isn't much difference in price, flying nonstop would not only reduce exposure to the most accident prone phases of flight, but it will probably take quite a bit of time off your trip too.

### **2. Choose larger aircraft**

Currently, aircraft with more than 30 passenger seats were all designed and certified under the strictest regulations. Also, in the unlikely event of a serious accident, larger aircraft provide a better opportunity for passenger survival.

### **3. Pay attention to the preflight briefing**

Although the information seems repetitious, the locations of the closest emergency exits may be different depending on the aircraft that you fly on and seat you are in. Some passenger safety briefings include a few words about the position to take in an emergency landing, and AiSafe.com has put together a video below that goes into much greater detail, showing six common crash positions.

### **4. Keep the overhead storage bin free of heavy articles**

Overhead storage bins may not be able to hold very heavy objects during turbulence, so if you or another passenger have trouble lifting an article into the bin, have it stored elsewhere. A heavy bag falling out of an overhead bin can cause a serious injury, so if one is above your head, try to move the bag or change your seat. Check out the Top 10 Baggage Tips for more suggestions for dealing with carry-on and checked luggage.

### **5. Keep your seat belt fastened while you are seated**

Keeping the belt on when you are seated provides that extra protection you might need to help you avoid injuries from flight turbulence.

### **6. Listen to the flight attendants**

The primary reason flight attendants are on an aircraft is for safety, so if one of them asks you to do something like fasten your seat belts, do it first and ask questions later. You can also take other steps to improve your safety and comfort in the cabin like wearing comfortable clothes. You should also get up a walk around on longer flights to help avoid problems like deep vein thrombosis.

### **7. Don't bring any hazardous material**

There are rather long lists of hazardous materials that are not allowed, but common sense should tell you that you shouldn't bring gasoline, corrosives, poisonous gases, and other such items on the aircraft unless they were allowed by the airline and shipped in a proper container. While the list of banned materials is too long to remember, you should take the time to find out about the most common prohibited and hazardous items you should not

bring on board.

**8. Let the flight attendant pour your hot drinks**

Flight attendants are trained to handle hot drinks like coffee or tea in a crowded aisle on a moving aircraft, so allow them to pour the drink and hand it to you.

**9. Don't drink too much**

The atmosphere in an airliner cabin is pressurized to about the same altitude as Denver, so any alcohol you consume will affect you more strongly than at sea level. Moderation is a good policy at any altitude, and in the air limiting your drinking is a good way to reduce the chance of an air rage incident involving you or someone else.

**10. Keep your wits about you**

In the unlikely event that you are involved in an emergency situation such as a precautionary emergency evacuation, follow the directions of the flight attendants and flight crew and exit the aircraft as quickly as possible.

**Bonus tip**

You might find that wearing hearing protection during your next flight may relieve ear popping and pressure, and make your next flight more quiet and comfortable.

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## **Using Child Restraints on Aircraft**

If you have a small child and are considering using an approved car seat during the trip, one advantage is that this is not counted as a carry-on item. However, if you decide to use it, there are a number of things you may want to consider before taking it on your next trip by air.

When you fly with a child under the age of two, you have a choice. Your child can ride on your lap for free, or you can buy a ticket and put your child in a seat. Although it is legal in the US to carry children under two on your lap, the FAA strongly recommends that all children who fly, regardless of their age, be protected by an approved child restraint system (CRS) or child restraint device that is appropriate to the child's size and weight. Proper use of an approved child restraint system enhances child safety in the event of an accident, and also for the much more common problem of aircraft turbulence. A CRS also provides protection for a child during turbulence.

The FAA recommends that a child weighing less than 20 pounds (9.1 kilos) use a rear-facing CRS, that one weighing from 20 to 40 pounds (9.1 to 18.1 kilos) use a forward-facing CRS, and that those over 40 pounds (18.1 kilos) use an airplane seat belt

### **Restraint options**

- \* A hard-backed child safety seat that is approved by the government for use in both motor vehicles and aircraft.
- \* An FAA-approved alternative to using a hard-backed seat and is approved only for use on aircraft. For example, FAA has approved a new harness-type device appropriate for children weighing between 22 and 44 pounds. It uses an additional belt and shoulder harness that goes around the seat back and attaches to the passenger lap belt to provide restraint for the upper part of the body.

### **Using an approved child restraint systems**

- \* Make sure your CRS is government approved and has "This restraint is certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft" printed on it. Otherwise, you may be asked to check the CRS as baggage.
- \* Make sure a child safety that is an alternative to an approved hard-backed seat has the phrase "FAA Approved in Accordance with 14CFR 21.305(d), Approved for Aircraft Use Only" on it.
- \* Arrange for your airline to help you if you need help making a connecting flight. Carrying a CRS, a child, and luggage through a busy airport can be challenging.

### **Other restraint systems**

While booster seats and harness vests enhance safety in vehicles, FAA prohibits passengers from bringing these types of devices on airplanes for use during taxi, takeoff and landing. These devices should be checked as baggage. Also, supplemental lap restraints or "belly belts" are not approved for use in both airplanes and vehicles in the United States.

### **Before you fly**

- \* Check with the airline to find their busiest days and times. By avoiding these times

you are more likely to be on a flight with an empty seat next to a parent. In many cases airlines will allow you to seat your child under two years of age in a child restraint in the empty seat at no extra charge. Ask your airline for its policy regarding an empty seat.

\* Ask the airline if they offer a discounted fare for a child traveling in a CRS. When you buy a ticket (discounted or full fare) for your child, you are guaranteed that they will have a seat and that you will be able to use the CRS.

\* If you purchase a ticket for your child, reserve adjoining seats. A CRS should be placed in a window seat so it will not block the escape path in an emergency. A CRS may not be placed an exit row.

\* Check the width of your CRS. While child seats vary in width, a CRS no wider than 16 inches (40.6 cm) should fit in most coach seats. A CRS wider than 16 inches (40.6 cm) is unlikely to fit. Even if the armrests are moved out of the way, a wide CRS will not fit properly into the frame of the aircraft seat.

\* If you need to change planes to make a connecting flight, request that the airline arrange for assistance in your connecting city.

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## **Airline Rules for Unaccompanied Children**

Thinking about letting your child fly alone? Make sure you check with your airline before you buy your ticket. Most airlines allow a child under the age of 18 to fly alone, and the rules and restrictions for what they call unaccompanied children are different for each airline. Airlines are free to enforce any rules they want, and no two airlines will have exactly the same policies.

In the US, there are no clear regulatory guidelines from the FAA with respect to unaccompanied children, so it is important that you take the time to understand what your airline will allow. This brief overview will discuss the typical restrictions of these programs as well as a number of issues that you may want to address before allowing a child to travel alone on an airplane.

### **Age limits - minimums and maximums**

Airlines treat children traveling alone differently depending on the age of the child. Most airlines have a minimum age for their unaccompanied child service, typically five, and a maximum age, typically 12.

Children younger than the minimum age will have to travel with an adult. If your child is appears to be beyond the age limit set by the airline, you or your child may be asked to provide some kind of proof of the child's age, so be prepared to have appropriate documentation to the airport.

### **Rules for older children**

If a child is older than an airline's maximum age for their unaccompanied child program, that airline may allow that child to travel under their program's rules, but that child may not be able to use special services for unaccompanied children such as having an escort while at an airport or being allowed to board the aircraft early.

### **Other restrictions and requirements**

For unaccompanied children traveling under the airline's supervision, there may be additional restrictions and requirements. While the number and type of restrictions vary by airline, typical restrictions may include the following:

- \* Allowing unaccompanied children only on nonstop flights
- \* Having a higher minimum age if the child has to change planes
- \* Not allowing unaccompanied children on the last flight of the day
- \* Not allowing unaccompanied children on flights that involve a second carrier
- \* Requiring earlier check in, typically 60 to 90 minutes before departure
- \* Charging adult fares or additional fees for unaccompanied children

One way around these restrictions is to simply not use the airline's program. This may only be an option for older children who are not required to fly under the airline's program, and would only make sense if you believe the child is mature enough to deal with typical airport situations such as navigating the check in process or dealing with schedule changes and delays.

### **Issues with older children**

Children who are too old to travel under an airline's unaccompanied child program face other issues. The most important is that the child will have to be deal with any travel problem that comes up. This may include lost, stolen, or damaged baggage; airline security issues, flight delays and cancelations, and personal safety. You should prepare your child for common air travel problems and make sure that your child understands what to do in these situations.

### **Additional costs**

The typical unaccompanied minor program has fees or other costs associated with the service. That fee may be higher if there is a connecting flight or there may be a discount if more than one unaccompanied child is traveling.

### **Identification requirements**

For domestic travel in the US, passengers under the age of 18 are not required to have identification to get past security. Depending on the airline, they may not be required to have identification to purchase a ticket or get a boarding pass issued. However, the adults who are responsible for the child at the departure airport and arrival airport are required to have acceptable identification. While the airlines typically do not specify the identification required for the adult who drops off or picks up the child, the same kinds of government-issued photo identification that an adult uses for airline travel (for example a drivers license or state-issued ID card) should be sufficient.

While not required, it is probably a good idea for older teens to have valid photo identification, especially if the child is too old the airline's unaccompanied child program. AirSafe.com recommends the use of an identification that would be acceptable for domestic travel and that does not contain the child's home address. A US passport is especially attractive because it does not include the passport holder's address. The same is also true for passports from many other countries. State-issued photo identification cards are typically issued by the same organizations that provide drivers licenses and they are also an acceptable form of identification. If you use a state-issued identification card, it may be wise to use an address other than a home address in order to safeguard your child's privacy.

### **Escorting the child to and from the aircraft**

Whenever possible, you should escort your child through security and preferably all the way to their seat in the aircraft. For some airlines, you may be required to escort the child to the gate. Also, the person picking up the child should be waiting at the gate at the arrival airport. You will likely need to go get an escort pass or similar document from the airline in order to enter the gate area. If you are not allowed to escort your child into the secure area of the airport, make sure that an appropriate airline representative is personally escorting your child.

### **Supervision by airline employees**

The level of supervision that the airline has for unaccompanied children will vary by airline. It is very unlikely that the airline will one or more adults at a child's side on the aircraft. While in flight, the child will likely be supervised by the flight attendants. Make sure that a flight attendant, preferably the chief flight attendant, is aware of the unaccompanied child. Also, make sure that the child understands that if there are any

problems during the flight, that the flight attendant should be contacted.

If the child has to take a connecting flight, make sure that the child knows that they have to be escorted to the next flight by an airline representative. Once the child is in the waiting area, there may be an airline representative at that airport who will be responsible for supervising your child between flights, but that person will likely have additional duties, including supervising other children. Make sure that your child understands the need to stay within sight of the responsible airline employee. If you think that your child may not be able to handle this kind of situation, then only use nonstop flights.

### **What happens if the aircraft is diverted or delayed?**

Once the flight departs, the aircraft may have to make an unscheduled landing, either returning to the departure airport or going to an alternate airport. Also, a connecting flight could be delayed or canceled. Typically, the airline will contact the persons responsible for picking up or dropping off the child and make alternate flight arrangements. This could include arranging alternative transportation back to the original airport, arranging a later flight to the original destination, or arranging a flight to an alternative where a responsible adult can pick up the child.

A child who is flying alone, but who is not using the airline's unaccompanied child program will likely be treated like any other passenger. Your child should tell an airline representative of their travel situation, but that is no guarantee that the airline will be willing or able to offer any additional services.

Depending on the airline's policies, if the flight is delayed overnight, the airline may place the child in a hotel room under the supervision of an airline representative, in a hotel room alone, or in a hotel room with another unaccompanied child. The airline may also have a policy where it takes no responsibility for overnight accommodations for an unaccompanied child and will turn the child over to the local authorities for the night. It is important that you have a clear understanding of the airline's policies. At the airport, ask an airline representative for a printed copy of the airline's policies on unaccompanied children. Also, print a copy of any policies that you may find on the airline's web site.

### **What happens if no one is there to pick up the child?**

If for some reason there is no responsible adult at the destination airport, what happens next will depend on the airline's policies. The airline may make an effort to contact the person who was to pick up the child and if there were some kind of short delay, there will likely not be any problems. If no one can be contacted at the destination, then the responsible adult at the departure airport may be contacted to discuss alternatives. For these reasons, it is very important that the airline have several alternatives for contacting the responsible adult at both the destination and departure airports. If no one is available to take responsibility for the child, the airline may have to turn over the child to the local authorities.

### **International flights**

If a child is traveling unaccompanied on an international flight, there may be additional requirements beyond what the airline may require. Depending on the circumstances, you may need to have additional documentation to allow a child to leave the departure country or to enter the destination country. Contact the appropriate authorities for each involved country to ensure that all requirements are being met.

### **Flights on partner airlines**

While you may arrange for your child's travel through one airline, the child may end up on a subsidiary of that airline or with a partner airline for some or all of the trip. Check with the airline to see if your child's trip will involve a subsidiary of that airline or a partner of that airline. If this is the case, review the policies for the other airline and if one or more of those policies are not acceptable, make alternative arrangements.

### **Unaccompanied flying checklists**

The following checklists may be useful reminders for adults and children before and during a flight.

#### **Checklist for adults**

- \* Review the airline's written policies before making your reservation.
- \* Find out how to contact the appropriate airline contact at both the departure airport and the destination airport.
- \* Provide the airline with at least two ways to contact a responsible adult (preferably two or more responsible adults) at both the departure airport and the arrival airport.
- \* Have the child carry a copy of that same contact information.
- \* Make sure that any responsible adult who will drop off or pick up a child has valid photo identification.
- \* If possible, escort your child onto the aircraft.
- \* Remain at the airport at least until the aircraft takes off.
- \* Check on the progress of the flight, and if it the flight will be delayed or diverted, contact both the airline and the responsible adult at the destination airport.
- \* If the child is able to use a telephone, provide the child with the means to make phone calls (change, phone card, cell phone, etc.).

#### **Checklist for children**

- \* At the airport, find out what person from the airline is responsible for you.
- \* While waiting to board your flight, stay in the gate area in sight of the airline employee who is responsible for you. If you have to leave the gate area, make sure that an airline employee is either escorting you or is aware of your location.
- \* In the airplane, make sure you contact the flight attendant if there are any problems
- \* When you get on the airplane, ask the flight attendant if you can be seated so that no one is sitting next to you.

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## **Top 10 Safety Tips for Children Traveling Alone**

Many airlines, including all of the major US airlines, allow children as young as five to travel alone. In addition to the usual risks that come with flying, there are additional risks that are associated with children flying alone. Many of these risks can be overcome by using common sense and taking a few basic precautions. The following tips will help both children traveling solo and those responsible for the child to deal with many of the problems that may be encountered.

### **1. Consider the maturity of the child**

While airlines allow children as young as five to travel unaccompanied, younger children may not be ready or willing to be in the presence of strangers for several hours, and may not be able to handle unusual situations that they may encounter. AirSafe.com makes the following recommendation: if your child is old enough to travel alone on public transportation, is able to spend time away from family in an organized setting like an overnight trip with a youth group, then that child is probably old enough to travel unaccompanied on a flight that includes a change of planes. Nonstop flights would be appropriate for children with less maturity.

### **2. Coordinate with whoever is picking up the child**

Make sure that whoever is picking up the child knows all the relevant details of the child's trip and is able to contact either you or the airline to confirm the arrival time of the flight. The person picking up the child should also have identification that exactly matches the information that you supplied the airline. You should have the pickup person arrive early at the airport and contact you when they arrive. If you can't confirm their arrival at the airport, have an alternate person pick up the child.

You should also include with the child a copy of all of the contact information that you supplied the airline. If the child is able to use the telephone, you should provide them the means to contact someone (change, phone card, cell phone, etc.) if there is a flight cancellation, flight delay, or other problem.

### **3. Tell your child what to expect during the flight**

You should explain clearly to the child what will likely happen during the flight, and what kind of experiences to expect. This is especially important if the child is an infrequent or first time flyer. They should know basic things such as where in the plane they will sit, how long the flight will be, and who will pick them up. It may help to have the child carry a picture of the person or persons who will be picking them up.

### **4. Discuss appropriate behavior with your child**

Make sure you take the time to discuss appropriate behavior with your child. That includes the behavior of other passengers and the child's behavior. If another passenger acts in an inappropriate way, be sure that your child knows to inform a flight attendant or other airline representative.

Inappropriate behavior on the part of other passengers includes rude, offensive, or threatening comments; inappropriate touching; inappropriate conversations; taking food or other items away from the child; or other behavior that makes the child uncomfortable or fearful. In addition, inappropriate behavior would include any attempt to elicit personal

information about the child. Make sure that you child understands that no passenger they meet needs to know things such as his or her full name, their home address, telephone number, or the address of their destination.

### **5. Request appropriate seating**

When you make a reservation and especially when you check in you child, make sure that the child has a convenient seat. Request to have your child seated in a row without any other passengers, or with at least one empty seat between the child and the next passenger. Also, request that your child not sit in the same row as passengers who are consuming alcohol.

### **6. Review the airline's policies**

Every airline has slightly different policies on how they accommodate unaccompanied children. Take special note of their policies for escorting children at connection airports and accommodations in the event that the flight is delayed or diverted. Note that some airlines policies do not include providing overnight accommodations and the airline may turn over your child to local authorities if the flight is delayed overnight. General information and insights concerning airline policies are available in the section of this ebook covering [Airline Rules for Unaccompanied Children](#).

### **7. Take extra precautions for connecting flights**

If the child has to change planes, make sure that the airline has an adequate process for supervising the child when traveling between gates or while in waiting area. Make sure that the child understands that when traveling between gates that they must be escorted and that when waiting for their next flight that they must remain in clear view of whatever airline person is responsible for them.

### **8. Spend extra time at the airport**

You should plan on coming to the airport early and staying for a while after departure. If there are last minute changes before the flight's scheduled departure, getting there early gives you a better opportunity for dealing with the situation.

### **9. Identify the lead flight attendant**

Either you or your child should take the time to identify the lead flight attendant so that they know that there is an unaccompanied child present. On larger aircraft, you should identify at least one flight attendant who will be in the immediate area of the child.

### **10. Escort the child to the seat**

If possible, escort the child onto the aircraft and check the area around the seat for hazards such as heavy carry-on items in the overhead storage bins. If there is anything about the seating situations or about nearby passengers that do not meet with your approval, contact the lead flight attendant or a gate agent to help deal with the situation.

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## **Top 10 Child Travel Safety Tips**

Traveling with children, especially infants and toddlers, puts special demands on the adults responsible for their well-being. Based on analyses of dozens of aviation incidents and accidents involving children and on my own experience as a traveling parent, here are ten tips that can make the trip safer for the child.

### **1. Plan ahead**

Ask yourself what supplies you will need to have on hand to take care of any normal or special needs for the child. Remember, it is the airline's responsibility to carry passengers to their destination, but it is the responsibility of the parent or responsible adult to take care of any children.

### **2. Use a child restraint system for small children**

The US Federal Aviation Administration strongly recommends that children weighing less than 40 pounds (18.1 kilos) be put into a child restraint system appropriate for their weight. Children under the age of two may be carried on the lap of an adult, but the lap child should have some kind of restraint system.

For small children, consider the following recommendations

- \* Find a way to conveniently carry an appropriate child restraint system through airports and into and out of aircraft.
- \* If the child is over the age of two and less than 40 pounds (18.1 kilos), [follow FAA recommendations for using child restraint systems](#).
- \* If the child is under two, consider buying a separate seat for the child and use an appropriate restraint system for the seat.
- \* If the child is under two and will be traveling on the lap of an adult, consider using an appropriate in-flight child restraint. Also, bring along an appropriate child restraint system for a seat just in case you happen to be next to an unoccupied seat.

### **3. Prepare for possible emergencies**

Make sure you are aware of emergency equipment or procedures that would apply to your child:

- \* Pay attention to the standard preflight emergency briefing.
- \* Ask a flight attendant if that particular aircraft has emergency equipment like life preservers specifically designed for small children.
- \* If your child has a medical condition that may become an issue during the flight, make a flight attendant, counter agent, or gate agent aware of that possibility before the flight.

### **4. Take all essential items for your child in carry-on luggage**

Take enough food, diapers, medicine, and other items to last through possible flight delays. If you put any of your child's essential items in checked luggage, you may run into problems if your checked bags are lost or delayed. Carrying all the child's essentials with you is especially important if your child is on a special diet or on medication.

### **5. Keep your children under control at all times**

You are responsible for supervising your child at all times. An unsupervised or unrestrained child could quickly wander way into dangerous areas such as galleys, especially if the responsible adult falls asleep. During a very long flight from Australia to the US, I observed a parent traveling alone with a child fall asleep and then saw their toddler wander down the aisle. You should also be careful when walking about the aircraft with your child so that they don't reach for cups of hot coffee, silverware, and other hazards.

#### **6. Seat your child away from an aisle**

Small children enjoy reaching out and exploring, but if they are on the aisle they could get hurt if their little arms get bumped by a person or serving cart passing down the aisle. Ideally, a responsible adult should sit on either side of the child. Also, one can seat a child on a row with a window on one side and a responsible adult on the other.

#### **7. If emergency oxygen masks deploy, put your mask on first**

This advice may seem cruel, but there is a very practical reason for it. If the brain is starved of oxygen (hypoxia), one can get confused or pass out and be unable to help themselves or their child. By putting on their mask first, the parent or responsible adult will reduce their chance of falling victim to hypoxia.

#### **8. Keep your child belted or in a child restraint system at all times**

This is for the same reasons given in the [Top 10 Airline Safety Tips](#). Turbulence can happen at any time and without warning, so keep your child belted in as much as possible. If the child, wants to get up and move around, let them do so only if the seat belt sign is off.

#### **9. Bring along safe toys**

Try to avoid bringing along toys that are sharp, heavy, or that break easily. If the child has an electronic game, only allow them to use it during the cruise portion of flight. Electronic games may interfere with an aircraft's navigational system during other phases of the flight.

#### **10. Take extra precautions for children traveling alone**

- \* Escort the child onto the aircraft and check the area around the seat for hazards such as heavy carry-on items in the overhead storage bins.
- \* Inform the chief flight attendant that the child is traveling alone
- \* Ensure that the person meeting the child at the destination will have proper identification.
- \* Make it clear to the child that they should report any problems to a flight attendant. This could range from feeling sick to having a suspicious character seated next to them.
- \* If the child has to change planes, make arrangements for the child to be escorted between gates. This usually costs extra and is required for small children and is recommended for older children, especially those old enough to do it on their own but not mature enough to deal with potential problems or temptations at a busy airport.
- \* Review the [Top 10 Tips for Children Traveling Alone](#).

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## **How to Complain About Your Airline Service**

Flying as an airline passenger is an often memorable experience, but there are times where the experience is memorable for all the wrong reasons: mechanical problems, poor service, bad food, lost luggage, or any of a number of other problems that result in a significant inconvenience or financial loss for the passenger. If you experience this kind of problem with your airline, you may want to deal with it by lodging a complaint with the airline or to one of the authorities that oversee air transportation.

### **Know the rules**

When you purchase plane tickets, you and the airline have entered into a contract that covers many different situations that you may face during a flight. Each airline has a specific set of guidelines that are used for situations such as flight delays and overbookings, as well as for lost or damaged luggage.

What you will face will depend on your airline's policies and where you are flying. For example, you can expect that policies will be different between your cheap flight to Las Vegas and your overseas flight to London. The first flight might be with a discount airline that only provides the minimum required by the appropriate civil aviation regulations, while the airline behind the international flight may go well beyond the minimum requirements to keep a customer from considering a competing airline.

### **Dealing with a problem immediately**

Whenever you can identify a problem on the spot, your best option will usually be to bring it to the airline's attention and give them a chance to resolve the issue. If you are at the airport, then contact the airline's customer service representatives, a manager, or some other employee who has the authority to immediately take care of your problem. If you are in flight, then contact the head flight attendant.

For example, if you are involuntarily bumped from your flight due to overbooking, you are typically eligible for some kind of compensation from the airline. If the airline makes an offer that is acceptable, take it. If not, make a counter offer. If you and the airline can't come to an agreement on the counter offer, then everyone is happy. If can't be resolved on the spot, you should start document your experience, gather relevant information from the airline, and prepare to file a formal complaint with the airline. If your complaint involves a US airline or involves an airline flight to or from the US, you can also use the [AirSafe.com Online Complaint system](#) and AirSafe.com will evaluate your complaint and possibly forward it to the US Department of Transportation.

### **Understand why you are complaining**

After you have decided to gather information about your situation, but before you make that phone call or write that letter, you should take a bit of time and get to know a few basic things about your particular circumstances:

- \* Why you are complaining.
- \* What situation caused you to complain.
- \* What people or organizations played a role in that situation.
- \* How you want to have the complaint addressed.
- \* What should you reasonably expect as an outcome.

It may seem obvious to you why you want to complain and what you want to have happen, but you have to be very specific in a complaint to give yourself the best chance of success. If you are not able to come up with enough relevant details, it would be difficult for even a well-meaning airline to be able to respond appropriately. One must also be reasonable when it comes to the expected outcome of your complaint. You should only expect compensation if the airline is obligated to do so. It is beyond the scope of this article to describe every kind of situation that may obligate the airline to compensate you. However, following the advice in this article will likely put you in a position to know if your complaint may also lead to some kind of compensation.

### **Complaining basics**

Taking the time to assess your situation at the beginning will make the rest of the complaint process as smooth as possible. That complaint process can be roughly broken down into the following sets of tasks: writing down the facts of the situation, understanding whether you have a reason to expect a response or compensation as a result of your complaint, and filing the complaint in the places where it can do the most good.

### **Writing down the relevant details**

If at all possible, you should take notes as soon as possible after you realize you are in a situation where you may want to complain to the airline. Much of the basic information, such as your flight number, or airport, is likely in your travel records. The most important details are the ones that directly relevant to your situation. If you were given substandard service by a flight attendant, that detail may be the name of a particular flight attendant. If your problem were a piece of checked luggage that was lost, then you would need any documentation that was associated with that lost bag.

One thing to remember is that you should stick to the factual, relevant, and verifiable information associated with your complaint. For example, claiming that a gate agent was, rude, and charged you unnecessarily for an extra checked bag may be factual and verifiable, but discussing the inappropriate and rude behavior is not relevant if your objective is to be compensated for an inappropriate baggage charge.

Your efforts to document what happen will help you to address two fundamental issues: what is your specific complaint and what do you expect the airline to do about it.

### **Understand your situation**

When you purchase a ticket, you and the airline have entered into a contract that covers many different situations that you may face during a flight, including situations that are common sources of complaints such as cancelled flights and lost luggage. No matter what the source of your complaint may be, you should make an effort to get documentation from your airline that provides the details of the agreement that they have with you. This is typically available from the gate agent or customer service office at the airport. While it may not answer all of your questions, it may tell you key bits of information such as what specific aspects of the agreement may have not been met or the address where you may send your complaint.

Keep in mind that if your complaint involves a potential civil or criminal lawsuit, that you will likely have to get professional legal advice to go forward. If it does not rise to that level, then you will likely be able to deal directly with the airline.

### **Filing a formal complaint**

If immediate relief is not possible, then the complaint will likely take days or weeks to resolve since you will likely be making a formal contact with the airline. Be sure to keep track of any notes that you have made, all of your travel documents (ticket receipts, baggage check stubs, boarding passes, etc.), as well as receipts for any out-of-pocket expenses that you incurred.

### **Limitations of baggage compensation**

There are limits to your compensation when it comes to claims of lost, stolen, or damaged baggage. Earlier sections in this ebook on hazardous and prohibited items, offers advice on what is not allowed to be packed in your luggage, but also what you should always keep in carry-on baggage. Airlines and even insurance companies will likely not compensate you for valuables like jewelry, cash, precious metals, and financial documents that were in your checked baggage.

While you may contact one or more airline officials by phone, your chance of getting any kind of resolution goes way up if you rely on written communication as your primary means of dealing with the airline. The following guidelines will also help to get the message across more effectively:

**Provide full contact information:** If you send either a letter or an email, make sure that your message includes all available options for contacting you (phone number, fax number, email address, physical mailing address, etc.)

**Keep it short:** Limit your initial message to maximum one page (roughly 250 words) Include all of the relevant information that the airline would need to understand your problem

**Give a reimbursement amount:** If you incurred expenses or monetary losses, state the amount that you expect to be reimbursed

**Be clear about your demands:** Be specific about the outcome that you want (reimbursement, other compensation, letter of apology, etc.)

**Keep a businesslike in tone:** No matter how strong you may feel about what happened to you, this is not the place to deal with the emotional impact of your experience. Focus on the facts, and provide specific information like dates, names, and flight numbers.

**Keep original paperwork:** Send copies of tickets, receipts, or other documents to back up your claim and save the original documents.

**Clearly identify people:** Include the names of any employees who were rude or made things worse, as well as anyone who might have been especially helpful.

**Be reasonable in your demands:** Don't ask for reimbursement for something that is beyond the airline's responsibility. For example, you can ask for reimbursement for any costs you incurred, but not for any time you may have spent dealing with your lost luggage.

If you follow these suggested guidelines, the airline will probably treat your complaint seriously. Your written communication with the airline will help the airline to determine what caused your problem, and may help the airline to prevent the same problems from happening to others.

### **Complaint filing options**

If your complaint involved a US airline or a non-US airline operating in the United States, you may want to submit your complaint with the US Department of Transportation (DOT). You can file a formal complaint in one of the following ways:

#### ***Report it to AirSafe.com***

Fill out the online complaint form at [complain.airsafe.com](http://complain.airsafe.com) and have AirSafe.com evaluate your complaint. Depending on the details of your complaint, it may be forwarded to an appropriate public organization such as the NTSB, FAA, or DOT, or it may be published (with personal details removed) by AirSafe.com in FlightsGoneBad.com, in another AirSafe.com related web site, or in an AirSafe.com podcast.

#### ***Contact the US Department of Transportation***

You can call the Aviation Consumer Protection Division at 202-366-0511 to record your complaint. You can also submit your complaint to the Department of Transportation's Aviation Consumer Protection Division using their online form at [airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/escomplaint/es.cfm](http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/escomplaint/es.cfm). Note that the DOT form requests personal information that the AirSafe.com form does not ask. Specifically, the DOT form asks whether you are a passenger, relative of a passenger, a lawyer acting on behalf of a client, or a travel agency. The AirSafe.com form makes no such distinctions and does not request this kind of personal information.

Mail a written complaint to the following address:

Aviation Consumer Protection Division, C-75  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

These forwarded complaints are not used by the DOT to mediate individual disputes, but they are used by the DOT as a basis for rule making, legislation, and media reports. In one of the DOT reports, the monthly Air Travel Consumer Report, major US airlines are ranked by several measures, including by the number of complaints. Normally, the DOT does not send any response to consumer complaint inputs. The DOT may recommend that a report be forwarded either to the FAA for aviation safety matters, or to the TSA for security issues.

#### ***Safety complaints***

When you want to point out a specific situation that you believe threatens the safety of passengers, crew, or other members of the public, it is important that you make the appropriate authority aware of this situation. In the United States, that authority is the Federal Aviation Administration.

For safety issues related to US airports, to any aircraft flying in the US, or to US registered aircraft flying anywhere in the world, contact the FAA at:

Assistant Administrator for System Safety ASY-100  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.

Washington, DC 20591

You can also contact the FAA by phone at 866-TELL-FAA (1-866-835-5322).

***Security complaints to the TSA***

In the US, the Transportation Security Administration is responsible for screening passengers and baggage on US flights, including checked baggage.

If your complaint involves some part of the security process or if you suspect that a TSA representative is responsible for the loss or damage of an item, there are specific procedures that you will have to follow. The TSA Claim Form should have all the information that you need.

Once you have completed the forms, keep a copy for your records and mail the claim to the address indicated on the claim form. You may direct other complaints and comments to:

\* TSA Contact Center at [tsa-contactcenter@dhs.gov](mailto:tsa-contactcenter@dhs.gov)

\* Claims Management Branch at [tsaclaimsoffice@dhs.gov](mailto:tsaclaimsoffice@dhs.gov) or by fax at 571-227-1904

Send written correspondence to:

TSA Claims Management Branch  
601 South 12th St.  
TSA-9  
Arlington, VA 20598-6009

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## **Dealing with Lost, Stolen, Damaged, or Delayed Luggage**

One of the risks of checking your luggage is that it may be damaged, stolen, lost, or delayed for any number of reasons. There are two things that you can do to deal with this situation, prepare in advance for a lost bag, and being ready to deal with the situation quickly should it happen to you.

### **Dealing with delayed luggage**

Preparing for the worst will reduce the hassles that come with having problems with not getting your checked luggage after the flight. Many of the preventive steps were covered in other parts of this book, particularly the sections titled “Reducing Checked Luggage Risks” and “Things You Should Never Put in Checked Baggage.” As soon as it is clear that your bag did not arrive, or arrived with damage, you should do the following:

**Contact the airline immediately:** If you don’t see your bag in the baggage claim area, contact the airline’s baggage office or baggage agent and report your missing bag. If the airline determines that the bag is arriving later, you can provide information on where you would like the bag delivered. Many airlines allow you only a limited amount of time to report missing luggage.

**Collect relevant information:** Make sure you keep all of your flight documentation, including the baggage claim ticket and boarding pass, so that you can provide the airline with information to help them find the bag, and to provide you with the basic information you may need to make a claim. You may also want to get information such as the name and contact information of the airline employee who is helping you, or of one of that person’s manager or supervisor just in case you have to make a later claim.

**Keep track of related expenses:** If you have to buy necessary items to replace items in your bag, keep any receipts so that you can justify any future reimbursement expense. Also, ask the airline if they provide any immediate benefits such as free basic toiletry items.

**Start the lost baggage compensation process:** Even if the airline assures you that your bag will arrive, start the process for getting compensation for lost luggage. If the airline has any forms that you will have to fill out, collect them now.

### **Dealing with lost or damaged luggage**

If your bag has significant damage, or if you determine that your bag won’t arrive, you should immediately take action:

**Fill out any claim forms:** If the airline has any lost or damaged claim forms, then fill them out and submit the documentation, along with a copy of any of your supporting information such as your claim ticket and boarding pass. Be sure to keep a copy of any form or document that you submit.

**Get estimated or actual costs of any replacement items:** If you had to purchase replacement items, make sure you collect all the receipts so you can submit copies with any reimbursement claim to the airline. If you are not going to buy a replacement immediately, keep track of the estimated replacement costs in order to support any claim you will make to the airline.

**Review the airline's policies:** Find out what the airline will or will not reimburse by reviewing any documentation they have. If you don't get it directly from an airline representative, you can look for it on the airline's web site. If your only problem was damage was to your piece of luggage, keep in mind that airline's typically don't offer reimbursement for what they consider normal wear and tear, things like torn zippers or handles, or broken wheels. Also, airlines have limits on the maximum amount money for each claim, and also rules on what items will not be reimbursed.

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## **Compensation for Delays, Bumpings, and Overbookings**

If you are an air traveler, any flight that you take can be delayed for any number of reasons, for example due to weather or mechanical problems. In most cases, the delay does not cause any hardship. However, there are times when the delays can lead to missed connections, unexpected overnight stays in the airport, or other significant inconveniences. Airlines that fly in the US are not legally obligated to provide any compensation for a delayed passenger. They are however, required to compensate passengers who have a reservation but are denied boarding, also known as getting bumped from the flight.

This is in contrast to airlines that fly in the European Union, which are required to compensate passengers who are bumped, as well as passengers who experience many types of delays and flight cancellations. No matter where you fly, you should make the effort to become familiar both with what an airline is required by law to provide in the way of compensation, your airline's policies on compensating passengers, and how you may be able to negotiate for additional compensation.

### **Delays and cancellations for domestic US flights**

For domestic US Flights, there are no federal regulations that require any compensation for a delayed or cancelled flight. However, keep in mind that each airline may have a policy for compensating passengers whose flights are delayed or cancelled, and those policies may include compensations such as meals, hotel rooms, or phone calls. The airline may also arrange an alternate flight on another aircraft on either the same airline or with a different airline. These policies are either included with the paperwork associated with your ticket, or are available from an airline representative. Before you travel, you may want to review the airline's policies to see what compensation may be offered in the event of a delay or a cancellation.

### **Delays involving unaccompanied minors**

If there is an unaccompanied minor traveling, you should absolutely check with the airline before the trip. As is the case with all delays and cancellations involving domestic US flights, there are no US federal requirements for any special services or compensation for unaccompanied minors on a delayed or cancelled flight. At the very least, you should have an alternative plan in place to deal with the possibility of the child being delayed overnight or arriving at the destination airport well after the expected time. Additional resources on airline rules for unaccompanied minors at [children.airsafe.com](http://children.airsafe.com)

### **Delays and cancellations for non-US domestic flights**

Rules for compensation for delayed and cancelled flights will depend on the rules of that country and the rules of the airline. As is the case with domestic flights in the US, if you are traveling on a domestic flight in another country, for example during a Dominican Republic vacation, you should review the policies or regulations of that airline to see what compensation you can expect in the event of a delay or a cancellation.

### **Delays and cancellations for European Union related flights**

Unlike the US, the European Union (EU) does provide for compensation for flight delays and cancellations. In most, but not all, cases involving a delay or cancellation of a flight,

a passenger is entitled to compensation under European Parliament Regulation (EC) 261/2004 for delayed and cancelled flights. There are three levels of compensation:

**All delays over two hours:** In the event of long delays (two hours or more, depending on the distance of the flight), passengers must in every case be offered free meals and refreshments plus two free telephone calls, telex or fax messages, or emails.

**Overnight delays:** If the time of departure is deferred until the next day, passengers must also be offered hotel accommodation and transport between the airport and the place of accommodation.

**All delays over five hours:** when the delay is five hours or longer, passengers may opt for reimbursement of the full cost of the ticket together with, when relevant, a return flight to the first point of departure.

This regulation applies to all airline flights departing from a EU airport or to any airline licensed in the EU if that flight is departing from an airport outside the EU to a destination at an airport in a EU member state.

### **Delays and cancellations for other international flights**

While the EU has some regulations that specifically deal with EU related international flights, there are no requirements to compensate passengers on most other international flights that are delayed or cancelled.

The most relevant international treaty is the 1999 Montreal Convention, an international agreement signed by the US and many other countries. There is no specific language in this agreement that obligates the airline to compensate passengers in the event of a flight delay or flight cancellation. As would be the case with domestic US flights, review your airline's policies to see what compensation, if any, that the airline may provide.

### **Overbooking and involuntary Bumping on US airlines**

US airlines are allowed to overbook flights to allow for "no-show" passengers. However, if passengers are involuntarily bumped, airlines are required to do ask for volunteers to give up their seats in exchange for compensation. Most involuntarily bumped passengers are subject to the following minimum compensation schedule:

**Short delays:** There is no compensation if alternative transportation gets the passenger to the destination within one hour of the original scheduled arrival.

**Medium delays:** The equivalent of the passenger's one way fare up to a maximum of \$400 for substitute domestic flights that arrive between one and two hours after the original scheduled arrival time or for substitute international flights that arrive between one and four hours after the original scheduled arrival time.

**Long delays:** If the substitute transportation is scheduled to get you to your destination more than two hours later (four hours internationally), or if the airline does not make any substitute travel arrangements for you, the compensation doubles to a maximum of \$800. While this level of compensation is double the compensation that was available from 1978 to 2008, this doubling of passenger compensation did not even keep up with cost of living increases since 1978.

There are exceptions to these rules. This minimum compensation schedule does not apply to charter flights, to scheduled flights operated with planes that hold 30 or fewer passengers, or to international flights inbound to the United States. If a passenger can't be

accommodated to their satisfaction, they may be eligible to request a refund for the remaining part of the trip, even if the trip were on an otherwise nonrefundable ticket.

### **Denied boarding compensation in the European Community**

If you are bumped from a flight and your flight was either departing from a EU country, or if you were on an airline registered in the EU and your flight departed outside the EU for a destination within the EU, you would have the following rights:

**Reimbursement:** Reimbursement of the cost of the ticket within seven days or a return flight to the first point of departure or re-routing to the final destination.

**Refreshments and hotels:** Refreshments, meals, hotel accommodation, transport between the airport and place of accommodation, two free telephone calls, telex or fax messages, or emails.

**Money:** Compensation totaling:

\* 250 euros for all flights of 1,500 kilometers or less;

\* 400 euros for all flights within the European Community of more than 1,500 kilometers, and for all other flights between 1,500 and 3,500 kilometers;

\* 600 euros for all other flights.

### **Compensation for downgrading in service in the European Community**

If an air carrier places a passenger in a class lower than that for which the ticket was purchased, the passenger must be reimbursed within seven days, as follows:

**Flights of 1500 kilometers or less:** 30% of the price of the ticket

**Longer flights of up to 3500 kilometers:** 50% of the price of the ticket for all intra-Community flights of more than 1500 kilometers, except flights between the European Community member states and the French overseas departments, and for all other flights between 1500 and 3500 kilometers.

**Other flights:** 75% of the price of the ticket for all other flights, including flights between the European Community member states and the French overseas departments.

### **Overbooking and voluntary bumping**

Before an airline involuntarily bumps passengers on an overbooked flight, they will first ask for passengers who are willing to voluntarily give up their seat. Passengers considering volunteering to give up their seat should be aware of two important considerations. First, they will no longer be compensated under the denied boarding or involuntary bumping rules that are in effect for that flight. Second, a passenger who voluntarily gives up their seat is in a position to negotiate with the airline for other compensation that could be more valuable to the passenger. However, a passenger would be wise to volunteer only after the following six steps:

1. Determine whether the later flight has a confirmed reservation and whether the scheduled arrival time is acceptable.
2. Determine what will happen if the airline is unable to find a seat on the next flight or if that flight is delayed or cancelled.
3. Determine whether the airline will pay for food, lodging, or other extra costs you may incur due to taking a later flight.

4. Determine whether the compensation being offered for giving up your seat is worthwhile (hint: ask for more than what an involuntarily bumped person would get).
5. Determine what kinds of restrictions or limitations are on the travel vouchers or other compensations that are being offered.
6. Insist that any compensation be provided immediately and with any documentation needed to claim the compensation.

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## **Four Passenger Complaints from FightsGoneBad.com**

FlightsGoneBad.com is one of the web sites managed by AirSafe.com, and it features actual passenger complaints submitted to the AirSafe.com complaint system. The following four cases are a sample of the kinds of customer service, airport security, baggage handling, and other travel complaints that are regularly sent to AirSafe.com

### **Case 1: Soldier leaves keys in checked bag**

The airline did not have my bag when I came back from an official military trip. I explained to them at the desk that all of my car and house keys were in that bag and I needed it, and would have no way to go get it. They told me that they would bring it to me. They said they had another flight coming in this morning and would make sure my bag was on it. They took down my address and number and said they'd call me before heading out to bring me my bag. Then today when I called they said they wouldn't bring it to me because I was outside of Manhattan city limits, and that if I wanted it I could either pay for a cab myself or they could FEDEX it to me, but they would not be paying for expedited shipping and it would not be going out until Monday.

I'm on active duty in the Army, just returned from a mission in the Great Lakes and will not drive 15 miles to bring me my bag with my car keys and mission essential items. I do not have \$100 to spend on cab fare.

### *AirSafe.com Responds*

If you fly often enough with checked bags, eventually you will have one lost, delayed, or stolen, so prepare for that possibility when you pack. AirSafe.com recommends that some things should never go in checked luggage, and should always stay with you in a carry-on bag. The kinds of things you should not put in checked bags include medicine, computers, electronic files, legal documents; credit cards, checks, or other financial documents; cash, jewelry, keys, and items of great sentimental value.

As for the airline rules on returning bags, remember that each airline has their own rules for returning bags, and those rules will often depend on what resources the airline has at your destination airport. Unfortunately, you usually don't find out what rules will apply to you until you have a lost bag.

### **Case 2: Last minute denied boarding leads to missed flight**

This complaint from Charles is an example of what can go wrong if you are denied boarding, but his actions kept the situation from getting much worse.

I booked reservations with Northwest Airlines for flight NW 4310 leaving Baton Rouge at 6:20 AM and for following flights. At the time of the reservation, I provided the airline with my credit card information and was advised that I had confirmed reservations and paid for tickets. I received a conformation by email. I arrived at the Baton Rouge airport and checked one bag. I was given a boarding pass, a baggage coupon that indicated a \$20 charge, and a baggage claim check. I was advised by the Delta counter person that I was "all set" and should proceed to the gate area.

After presenting the boarding pass and my ID to the TSA agent, I was allowed through the security screening and preceded to the assigned gate. The Delta agent at the gate

explained that it was a small plane, gave me a claim check for my carry-on, and told me to surrender it at the end of the ramp before boarding the plane. I was perhaps the fifth person in line to board and when I tried to board the gate agent advised me “that there is something wrong with your boarding pass” and then asked me to wait until the others had boarded. After the plane was loaded, the agent had to ask another agent why the boarding pass wasn’t valid.

The second agent advised me that the ticket had never been paid for and I needed to give him my credit card to pay for it. After I did, he advised me that there would be an additional fee (I believe it was \$35) since I was paying at the gate. When I objected to this, he told me there was nothing he could do about it, he then advised that it was too late to buy a ticket since it was within ten minutes prior to the flight departure.

I asked the gentleman to at least get my checked bag off the flight, as there were no other flights to Tulsa that day and I would have to hurry and drive to the New Orleans airport for a flight on Southwest. My bag was returned to me at the ticket counter where I was originally issued my boarding pass.

They had time to retrieve my checked baggage but didn’t have time to sell me a ticket. I asked to speak to the manager, and a man came up who did not have a name tag, and did not introduce himself. I believe that the other counter attendant referred to him as Robert. I explained that I wanted compensation for denied boarding and Robert said it did not apply, as the airline had done nothing wrong. I asked to see a written copy of Delta’s procedures on denied boarding and Robert refused. He then gave me a small note with a phone number and advised me to call Delta Customer Service if I had any complaints.

I asked Robert if there was any federal agency I could complain to and he responded “don’t bother, they ignore complaints.” I then asked him to at least issue a refund for the \$20 they had charged for my checked baggage. Robert went into an inner office, and some twenty minutes later, he emerged to tell me he had canceled the charges for the checked baggage and had double checked to make sure there were no charges on my credit card for the tickets.

After my trip, using Southwest, my wife called Delta customer service at the number Robert had given me, only to learn that indeed there were charges for the tickets but the airline would issue a refund.

I believe that I was denied boarding on Delta flight NW4310 due to the mistakes of no one other than Delta personnel and subsequently I have been denied compensation. I would appreciate any assistance your office could provide me with this matter.

### *AirSafe.com Responds*

It seems that Charles did everything right. The ticket was purchased ahead of time, he received confirmation of the purchase by email, and the check in and security screening process went smoothly. For whatever reason, the airline issued a boarding pass, and by the time Charles when from the check in counter to the gate, the airline decided to not accept the ticket.

Unfortunately, there isn't much that Charles can do. Except for cases where a passenger is involuntarily bumped from a flight, there are no federal requirements for reimbursing passengers for delays or flight cancelations. If it turns out that the airline was mistaken



about the ticket, then Charles may get some kind of compensation, but that would likely be up to the airline. Charles has certainly done everything to make that possible, including documenting the process.

At one point after he was denied boarding, Charles asked to see a copy of the airline's denied boarding procedure. This was a reasonable request, and he should ask the airline in writing for a copy of their policy.

AirSafe.com agrees with the airline that complaining about this situation to a federal government agency will likely do little good. The most relevant agency is the Department of Transportation, and at best the complaint may end up in a statistical summary of airline complaints.

The one recommendation AirSafe.com would give for requesting compensation from the airline is to be very specific in the request. If the airline were at fault, requesting a refund of any extra costs associated with the trip is reasonable. However, Charles may want to consider other compensation such as one or two round-trip tickets.

### **Case 3: Always check with your airline to confirm your flight**

After much planning for the Christmas & New Years holidays, I had a less than pleasant experience on my leg from Kansas City to Salina, Kansas on Christmas Eve. Due to inclement weather, my flight (United flight 5096) was cancelled and rescheduled for the next day. This flight was again cancelled and found that the next actual flight that made it to Salina, Kansas from Kansas City was for the night of December 26th. By the way, my luggage (a new red roller bag) finally showed up filthy at that time. This was a fairly recent purchase also. The only reason I made it to Salina was the kindness of strangers from Pennsylvania that invited me to drive there with them or I would have been stranded.

Before my return flight on January 1st on United flight 5033, I received a call from the Salina airport December 31 around 5pm indicating that my flight was cancelled due to lack of no one working to fly the plane. I was rescheduled for the same departure time and flight number for January 2nd and again informed by the Salina airport that this flight was cancelled due to lack of no one to fly the plane.

I was rescheduled to fly back on January 3rd. This is the "funny part;" I even received courtesy calls from Orbitz around 3:30 am January 1st saying that my flight from Salina to Kansas City was on time. Another "funny" is that two booking sites that I checked indicated that these flights were still booking passengers for the Friday and Saturday flights that were cancelled.

I work in Customer Service and although I had no problems with the people I dealt with as far as courtesy as they were apologetic, after spending \$594.40 for my round trip flight from Michigan to Kansas and not getting the service I paid for, along with luggage problems and added expenses and inconvenience, I am requesting two round trip non-blackout days tickets in the continental US. I feel this is the least I deserve after having to change plans inconveniencing myself and my family.

### ***AirSafe.com Responds***

Unfortunately, US airlines on domestic flights are not required to compensate passengers for canceled flights or late flights, so she would be lucky to get anything out of the

airline. She has more hope about compensation for the damaged bag, so long as she can document the condition of the bag before the flight.

While you may get information about a flight from an online service, you should contact the airline directly if you have any questions about your flight, especially for delays and cancellations. If you book a ticket through a non-airline service like Orbitz, you should still check with an airline representative or the airline's web site for flight information.

#### **Case 4: Always check your boarding pass for mistakes**

I admit I must have hit the date wrong on the crummy Delta Website causing a ticket to be reserved for the following month instead of today. It was a shuttle flight that was half empty on the BOS-LGA leg since it was a Saturday. When I could not get a boarding pass online for the return flight, I realized that the wrong date was entered. The Reissue clerk (who would not even listen to my explanation without babbling on about the change fee of \$150 per person, which would have cost an additional \$300 for two of us, simply refused to hear any plea EVEN IF THE PLANE TODAY WAS HALF EMPTY. I admit it must have been partially my mistake and partially their website mistake but come on \$150 to change a ticket for the damn shuttle on a weekend.

#### *AirSafe.com Responds*

Always check and double check the information on any ticket order, including the name, date and time of travel, flight number, departure airport, and destination airport.

Especially important is your name since it must match the ID that all adults need in order to fly (while minors are not required to have an ID for domestic flights, it is a good idea to carry one if they have it).

Unfortunately, if you don't follow the airline's rules, you are at their mercy when it comes to things like change fees. You can try to talk to a customer service supervisor at the airport, but if that doesn't work you, then you are likely out of luck.

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## **How to Travel with Large Amounts of Cash**

Traveling with some amount of cash is normal, but when you travel with large amounts of cash, credit cards, debit cards, travelers checks, or other financial instruments that are prime targets for theft, you should take additional precautions when packing your bags or when heading through the security screening area.

### **How to protect your cash at the airport**

When you carry cash or other valuable financial items with you on an airline trip, you should take some very basic steps to keep from becoming a victim of theft.

- \* Avoid traveling with large amounts of cash.
- \* If you have to take cash, keep it in a carry-on bag and never in a checked bag.
- \* Keep your all of your financial valuables either on your person or close to you at all times.
- \* Keep your baggage and belongings in sight when passing through a security checkpoint
- \* If your carry-on baggage must be searched, insist on keeping your bag in sight.
- \* If asked about the contents of your baggage by a TSA agent or other responsible authority, tell the truth
- \* If you suspect that you have been a victim of theft, contact an airport police officer or other law enforcement representative immediately (note that TSA agents are not law enforcement agents)
- \* If you suspect that a TSA screener or other screening area employee has stolen your property, contact a supervisor.

### **Protecting your financial valuables in the sky**

Theft and loss can happen in the sky as well as on the ground. While it isn't that likely once you are in the plane, there are still a number of things you can do to reduce your risk:

- \* If possible, keep all of your cash and financial valuables in your pockets or in some kind of bag or container that you can take with you at all times
- \* Don't call attention to your situation by talking about it or displaying it.
- \* If you do have to put it in your carry-on bag, place your cash or other valuables in a smaller bag within your carry-on so that if you are asked to check it at the last minute, you can take out the smaller bag and keep it with you.

### **Travel within the US**

If you are traveling domestically within the US, you are allowed to have an unlimited amount of cash or other financial instruments with you. While you should answer any TSA or law enforcement representative's questions about the contents of your bags, you are not required to provide any documentation or proof about the source of your money.

Realistically, if a TSA screener or a member of law enforcement wants to question you or even detain you, there is nothing to stop them from doing this, so be prepared to do so just in case.

## **Travel to or from the US**

You are allowed to travel to or from the US with any amount of

Also, keep in mind while it is legal to travel domestically with large amounts of cash, when you are entering the US (with the US as your destination or in transit to another country), you have to declare currency, endorsed personal checks, travelers checks, gold coins, securities or stocks in bearer form that are valued at \$10,000 or more. Failure to do so can result in seizure by US Customs agents. When leaving the US with large amounts of currency, gold, or other valuables, you should review the customs requirements of your destination country.

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## How to Fly with Guns and Firearms

Normally, passengers are not allowed to bring ammunition, guns, or other firearms past the TSA screening area, or in the passenger cabin, but they are allowed to have them in checked baggage so long as you follow a few basic rules.

As discussed in detail in the section on prohibited items, Pistols, flare guns, BB guns, rifles, and other firearms are allowed in checked luggage, but must be unloaded, packed in a locked hard-sided container, and declared to the airline at check-in. This restriction also applies to firearms parts and ammunition.

When passengers check in, they're required to declare the items with the airline and ensure they are packed properly. TSA has no role in the declaration process. However, if the TSA searches your checked bag and finds weapons or ammunition that have not been properly declared or packed, they will have to notify a law enforcement officer and an airline representative. Depending on the local or state laws, you may be fined or even arrested.

TSA recommends that you provide the key or combination to the security officer if he or she needs to open the container. You should remain in the area designated by the aircraft operator or TSA representative to take the key back after the container is cleared for transportation. If you are not present and the security officer must open the container, TSA or the airline will make a reasonable attempt to contact you. If they can't contact you, the container will not be placed on the plane. Federal regulations prohibit unlocked gun cases (or cases with broken locks) on aircraft.

The key regulations around transporting guns and other firearms include the following:

- \* You must declare all firearms to the airline during the ticket counter check-in process.
- \* The firearm must be unloaded.
- \* The firearm must be in a hard-sided container.
- \* The container must be locked. A locked container is defined as one that completely secures the firearm from access by anyone other than you. Cases that can be pulled open with little effort do not meet this criterion.
- \* You must securely pack any ammunition in fiber (such as cardboard), wood or metal boxes or other packaging that is specifically designed to carry small amounts of ammunition (the TSA does not specifically say how much is a "small amount").
- \* You can't use firearm magazines/clips for packing ammunition unless they completely and securely enclose the ammunition (e.g., by securely covering the exposed portions of the magazine or by securely placing the magazine in a pouch, holder, holster or lanyard).
- \* You may carry the ammunition in the same hard-sided case as the firearm, as long as you pack it as described above.
- \* You can't bring black powder or percussion caps used with black-powder type firearms in either your carry-on or checked baggage.

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## **How to Fly with a Sex Toy**

In October 2011, writer and attorney Jill Filipovic was on an international flight from Newark, NJ to Dublin, Ireland, and upon arrival found in her checked bag a printed advisory from the TSA stating that her bag had been opened and inspected by the TSA. In the margin of the note, a TSA screener added an extra message saying "Get your freak on girl." The checked bag had contained a sex toy, and presumably the message was related to the presence of that device.

The extra inspection of a checked bag was a normal TSA procedure. The additional comments were not part of a normal procedure, and TSA representative Kawika Riley later apologized for that screener's behavior and described it as "highly inappropriate and unprofessional." That TSA screener was later fired.

### **Issues brought up by this incident**

While the TSA took appropriate action after this incident, the fact that the incident happened brings up two important issues for passengers. First, what are the legal rights passengers have when it comes to traveling with sex toys, and second, how can passengers travel safely with these items.

### **What is a sex toy?**

A sex toy is an object or device that is primarily used to enhance or facilitate sexual pleasure. Sex toys include things like dildos and vibrators, and can be made from a variety of materials, including glass, metal, wood, rubber, plastic, silicone, latex, or leather. While some sex toys are designed to resemble male or female human genitals, many are not. Also, while many common items may have a secondary use as a sex toy, this article is focused on those items that are designed to be used primarily as sex toys.

### **What are the laws or regulations concerning air travel with sex toys?**

The laws and regulations concerning travel with sex toys depend on where you travel. In general, when you travel domestically within a country, you should observe the appropriate laws and regulations of that country. When you travel between countries, you have to consider the laws of the country you are traveling from, the country you are traveling to, and any country you may be passing through on the way to your destination.

In the US, when it comes to flying on airliners or going through TSA security, the only limits that matter are the normal limits on hazardous or banned items. While there may be local or state laws restricting the possession of sex toys, there are no federal restrictions on ownership. If you review the sections of this book that deal with [prohibited and restricted items](#), you will see that the TSA would likely not have a reason to ban most sex toys.

### **What kinds of sex toys are restricted from the cabin?**

Devices which contain more than 3.4 ounces (100 ml) of liquid or gel type material are restricted from the passenger cabin. Also, if the device is made from very soft or flexible material, a TSA screener may treat it like a gel or liquid filled item and prevent you from carrying it past the checkpoint.

In addition to devices, sex toy accessory items, such as lubricating gels or creams, may also be restricted from carry-on baggage if the container has more than 3.4 ounces (100

ml) of liquid or gel.

### **What happens if the TSA does not allow my sex toy in my carry-on?**

If the TSA screener prevents you from taking your sex toy in your carry-on bag, you have the same basic choices that you have for any other item a screener may ban:

- \* Go back to the check in counter and send it as checked baggage.
- \* Make arrangements to ship it to your destination or to some other location.
- \* Discard the item.

Unless you have quite a bit of extra time, you may not have the option of going back to the check in counter or arranging to ship your item. If the TSA doesn't allow your item, you will most likely end up throwing it away.

### **Tips for traveling with sex toys**

There are a number of common sense things that you can do to protect your sex toys and to limit the likelihood that the TSA will cause you any embarrassment or excessive delays:

**Tell the truth:** If a TSA screener asks you what is in your baggage, just say what it is.

**Remove batteries:** This suggestion applies to any battery-powered item in your baggage that won't be used in flight.

**Put your items in separate clear plastic bags:** Keeping items in Ziploc type bags keeps them from being contaminated by handling by TSA screeners.

**Don't pack banned items:** Most sharp items, and liquid filled or gel filled items are typically banned from carry-on baggage, but can be packed in checked luggage.

**Do your research before traveling internationally:** If you are traveling to another country, check to see if your sex toys will be allowed into your destination country, or into any country you may pass through during your journey.

### **Complaining about your treatment**

Although traveling with sex toys is completely legal in the US, you may still encounter TSA officials whose conduct toward you may be rude or unprofessional. If this happens at a security screening area, you should immediately request to see a supervisor to discuss the matter. You also have several options for submitting a formal complaint. You could email the TSA's Contact Center at: [TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov](mailto:TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov), or if you believe you have been the target of discriminatory conduct you contact the TSA Office of Civil Rights and Liberties.

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## **How to Travel with Duty Free Liquid Items**

If you are traveling internationally, and you wish to make a duty-free purchase of liquor, perfume, cosmetics, or any other item that may contain liquids, gels, or aerosols, you should take extra precautions to ensure that your items will not be confiscated by security in the US or elsewhere. These suggestions apply only to those items in containers that are larger than 100ml (3.4 fluid ounces) because only larger containers are subject to many of the common restrictions on liquids and gels. Categories of duty-free items that fall under these restrictions include the following:

- \* Liquor
- \* Wine
- \* Perfume and body sprays
- \* Facial cleansers and creams
- \* Body or hand lotions
- \* Liquid make-up

Member countries of the European Union; as well as Iceland, Norway, Japan, Singapore, Australia, and others; have restrictions on liquid and gel products that are similar to the US restrictions regarding liquids and gels in carry-on bags. As a result, there are potential implications for passengers who purchase liquid duty-free items (e.g. perfume and liquor) while traveling to and from international destinations.

Because many duty-free shops in other countries are located before the security checkpoint, all liquid duty-free items purchased in those airports will be placed in special sealed tamper-evident bags in order to be permitted through those countries' security checkpoints. Note that the tamper-evident bag is not currently accepted through US checkpoints, but there are other options listed described below that may help you.

To avoid getting your liquid duty-free items taken by airport security, please follow the guidelines below.

### **Traveling from the United States**

Duty-free purchases of liquids of any size from shops in the US are permitted if you have a nonstop flight to an international destination.

If you have a connecting flight in Europe, Japan or another international destination, US duty-free liquid purchases in containers larger than three ounces will not be permitted through security checkpoints because they will not be in the an ICAO approved tamper-evident bag. However, many duty-free stores in US airports offer the approved tamper-resistant. If this is the case, make sure that the duty-free shop places your items it in the bag in the store.

While using tamper-evident bags may work for you in most situations, perhaps the best way to make sure to avoid any problems at the checkpoint is to wait until you reach your destination to purchase your duty-free items containing liquids, gels, or aerosols. Keep in mind that this option may not exist for every airport, so check ahead of time.

When traveling to an international destination with a connection, it is best to buy your duty-free items on the last leg of your trip when you do not need to pass through any

more security checkpoints.

**Note on Japan:** Japan does not use or accept the ICAO tamper-evident duty-free bag, so travelers changing planes in Japan for other international destinations should wait to purchase any liquid, aerosol or gel duty-free items in excess of 3.4 ounces (100ml) after arriving in Japan. Passengers who have liquid duty-free items in containers larger than 3.4 ounces will not be allowed to take them through the checkpoint during the security re-check process in Japan.

### **Returning to the United States from overseas**

On nonstop flights bound for the US, passengers carrying duty-free liquids purchased at an international airport will not have any problems.

On nonstop flights bound for the US, duty-free liquids purchased in an international airport will be permitted through the checkpoint only if they meet US requirements for the use of tamper-evident bags. Duty-free items delivered to the aircraft for passenger pick-up, purchased on the plane, or purchased after the security checkpoint are allowed.

If you are flying to the US and have a connecting domestic flight, you will be required to reclaim your checked bags prior to passing through customs inspection, so use this opportunity to place your duty-free liquids, aerosols, and gels in your checked bags before rechecking them for your connecting flight.

### **Other duty free advice**

When traveling to an international destination with a connection, buy your duty-free liquid items on the last leg of your trip.

In Europe and other countries that use the tamper-evident bag, passengers should not open the bag before the security checkpoint, or else the duty-free contents may be seized.

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## How to Travel with a Laptop

Laptop security is of particular concern to travelers because in the US you are required to remove the laptop from its carrying case for inspection. This exposes the laptop to increased risks from damage and especially from theft. In order to reduce the risks that you face, you should consider doing the following:

**Keep the laptop with your carry-on baggage** - Laptops are relatively fragile, as well as being an attractive target for theft. Keeping it with you on the plane is preferable to packing it in your checked luggage.

**Keep your smaller computers in your bag** - While larger laptops have to be taken out for inspection, smaller notebook computers like the 11-inch MacBook Air or iPad can stay in your bag. The same is true for smaller devices like the Kindle or Nook. If you pack several of these smaller devices in the same bag, the screener may inspect the bag or ask you to screen the devices separately.

**Be prepared to take it out for inspection** - In the US and in some other countries, your laptop must be taken out of its bag or carrying case before it is passed through an x-ray scanner.

**Separate the data from the laptop** - For most users, the information on a laptop is far more valuable than the laptop itself. One easy way to protect against the loss of data is to keep any key data separate from the laptop in a device such as a flash drive, CD-ROM, or DVD-ROM.

**Secure the laptop with passwords** - If you are unwilling or unable to separate the data from the laptop, at least put some kind of password protection on the laptop or on individual files or directories within the laptop.

**Use alternative electronic devices** - PDAs, handheld computers, and other data related devices are not required to be taken out of your carry-on bag, so if you can use an alternative to a laptop, this will reduce the likelihood of damage or theft.

**Keep the laptop in sight** - You may be delayed getting through the metal detector or you may be pulled aside for additional screening. If this happens, make sure you keep your laptop in sight. If you are traveling in a group, one thing that you can do is to have the first person through security be the person who takes care of all the laptops.

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## **How to Fly with Your Pet or Service Animal**

According to the US Department of Transportation, over two million pets and other live animals are transported by air every year in the United States. Federal and state governments impose restrictions on transporting live animals. In addition, each airline establishes its own company policy for the proper handling of the animals they transport. There are many rules and procedures that passengers have to be aware of when they travel with pets. The following overview will give you a general idea of what to expect when it comes to pet travel.

### **US government pet travel rules**

In the US, the Department of Transportation has some basic regulations when it comes to animal travel. Dogs and cats must be at least eight weeks old and must have been weaned for at least five days. If puppies or kittens less than 16 weeks of age are in transit more than 12 hours, food and water must be provided. Older animals must have food at least every 24 hours and water at least every 12 hours. Written instructions for food and water must accompany all animals shipped regardless of the scheduled time in transit. Dogs and cats can be brought to the airline for shipping no more than four hours before departure. This limit goes to six hours if shipping arrangements are made in advance. Airlines can't accept dogs and cats for shipment if the airline cannot prevent exposure of the animal to temperatures less than 45 degrees F (7.2 C) or more than 85 degrees F (29.5 C) for more than 45 minutes when the animal is transferred between the terminal and the plane, or for more than four hours when the animal is in a holding facility. These cold temperature limits (but not the high temperature ones) can be waived if approved by a veterinarian.

### **Airlines have different pet travel rules**

The most important thing to know is that rules can be very different for different airlines. In the US, the FAA allows each airline to set its pet travel policy, including whether they are allowed in the cabin, or for that matter whether they are transported at all. There are a number of things you have to consider, including what extra charges the airline may have for pets. Typical airline limitations include the following:

- \* A limited list of the types of pets that you can bring into the cabin
- \* A limit on the number of pets in the cabin
- \* A limit on the number of pets that may accompany you on the airplane
- \* A requirement that your pet be harmless, inoffensive and odorless
- \* A requirement that your pet remain in the container for the entire flight
- \* A requirement that you be able to produce a recently issued health certificate for your pet (typically a certificate of veterinary inspection (health certificate) issued within 10 days of travel)

### **Airline travel planning with pets**

Most airlines have additional requirements for travel with pets. It is important that you contact the airline as soon as possible to find out about their rules and limitations. Depending on where you travel, you may also have to make additional arrangements with other authorities, especially if you are traveling internationally with your pet. You should get advice from your veterinarian to see if your animal is healthy enough to fly.

Depending on your animal's breed or overall health, the air quality inside of an airline cabin may put a lot of stress on your pet. Cabin air is typically much drier than normal air, and the typical cabin air is thinner (has less oxygen) than air in Denver, Colorado.

### **Traveling to Hawaii with pets**

Hawaii has special limitations on pet travel, including a quarantine of animals traveling to the state, even for passengers flying from other parts of the US. Make sure that you review Hawaii's requirements (at <http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/ai/aqs/info>), contact the airline, and possibly consult your pet's veterinarian, prior to your travel to Hawaii. Otherwise, your pet could be quarantined for up to 120 days.

### **Pets in the passenger cabin**

Not every airline allows pets in the passenger cabin. Those that do typically allow only small animals that must be kept in some kind of cage or kennel for the duration of the flight. Also, the pets must be able to fit in the area under the seat and can't be in the overhead baggage compartments. An airline may also limit the maximum number of pets in the passenger cabin, as well as the number of pets in coach, business, or first class sections of the aircraft. It is also possible that an airline may allow pets in one class of service or section of the aircraft, but not another. Call your airline or visit the airline's web site for more details. If you are using two or more airlines for a trip, contact all of them.

### **Pet containers in the passenger cabin**

If an airline allows you to bring your pet into the cabin, your pet container is treated as carry-on baggage and you must follow all carry-on baggage rules of your airline and of the FAA. FAA rules include the following:

- \* Your pet container must be small enough to fit underneath the seat without blocking any person's path to the main aisle of the airplane.
- \* Your pet container must be stowed properly before the last passenger entry door to the airplane is closed in order for the airplane to leave the gate.
- \* Your pet container must remain properly stowed the entire time the airplane is moving on the airport surface, and for take off and landing.
- \* You must follow flight attendant instructions regarding the proper stowage of your pet container.

Since airlines typically allow one carry-on item for the overhead baggage compartment, and one other item small enough to fit under a seat, you will likely be able to take both a carry-on bag and your pet carrier.

### **Pets and pet containers in the cargo compartment**

If pets are not in the passenger cabin, they are typically transported in pressurized, temperature-controlled cargo compartments. This would not be the same area where checked baggage is kept. The cargo compartment where your pet would be kept would be heated or cooled to keep the temperature comfortable. Also, your pet will have enough oxygen as well. Confirm with your airline that this is the case because some aircraft may not have this kind of temperature controlled baggage compartment.

### **What to do if you have allergies**

If you are allergic to certain kinds of pets or to pet dander, but need to fly, you can reduce

the chance that there will be an animal in the cabin on your flight. You can fly on an airline that does not allow pets in the cabin. You can also ask the reservations agent for your airline if another passenger on the same flight has made reservations to travel with a pet. You should also check with your allergist or doctor before your trip to discuss travel related risks and ask if you should carry medications with you. If a reaction should occur during the flight, follow your doctor's treatment instructions and ask a flight attendant for assistance.

### **Airline pet travel rules and limitations**

Each airline sets its own rules when it comes to travel with pets. These rules usually include limitations on pet travel based on weather, time of year, size of the pet, or any number of other criteria. You should check directly with the airline when you purchase your ticket and also shortly before your departure date, since changes in the airline's rules may happen quickly or without advance notice.

### **Service animals and airline travel**

A service animal is not a pet, but rather an animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. In the US, a disabled passenger can travel with his or her service animal in the passenger cabin with relatively few limitations compared to the limitations on other kinds of pets. There is no limit to the number of service animals that can be on any flight. Service animals do not need any health certificates to travel and they do not need to be confined in a container or cage. While US airlines are required to make accommodations for travelers with service animals, there may be situations where a service animal may not be allowed in the cabin. If you plan to travel with a service animal, it would be a good idea to contact the airline prior to your travel to see if there may be any difficulties.

### **Reducing your pet travel risks**

You can reduce your chances of you pet getting too stressed during the trip by taking a nonstop flight, or a flight where you and your pet don't have to change planes. Put full contact information and any special car instructions in your pet carrier in case you and your pet get separated. You should also check your pet carrier to make sure it is in good working order. You can also avoid air travel during hot weather or busy holiday travel periods. Reconfirm your flight the day before you leave, and check the status online on the day of the flight to ensure there have been no unexpected flight changes. Get to the airport early so you can exercise your pet. You should personally place your animal in its travel crate, and pick up your animal as soon as possible after you arrive. When you get on the plane, let your flight attendant know that you have a pet is in the cargo compartment.

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## **Holiday Air Travel Advice**

In the US, the holiday period between Thanksgiving and New Years Day is a very busy time for personal travel. For many, this may be the only time this year that they will travel by air, and for some, it will be their very first time in the sky.

For novice and veteran fliers, there are many things that can ruin your trip, from missed connections and lost baggage to having some of your carry-on items confiscated by airport security. Please review the following pieces of advice, you may find something that will help you avoid problems, or help you deal with them should they happen to you.

### **Get to the airport early**

Assume that getting to the airport, parking, going through check in, and going through security lines will take longer than usual. Arrive early, and do what you can to avoid delays. If you are only taking carry-on bags, print out your boarding pass before getting to the airport and go straight to the security gate.

### **Keep track of any flight changes**

A day or two before your trip, check with your airline to see if your flight's schedule has changed. If you can, sign up for phone, email, or text messaging alerts from your airline to find out about any last minute changes to your schedule. Keep your cell phone with you and have the airline's customer service or reservations number handy just in case you run into problems and have to call the airline directly.

### **Identification requirements**

In the US, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) requires travelers over the age of 18 to have some sort of photo identification issued by a state, local, or national government agency. This would include driver's licenses, passports, and military ID cards but would not include student ID cards or employee ID badges.

If you do not have these kinds of IDs, you may be able to present alternative documentation to the TSA. Non-US/Canadian citizens are not required to carry their passports if they have documents issued by the US government such as Permanent Resident Cards. Those who do not should be carrying their passports for domestic US travel.

### **Security checkpoints**

Depending on the level of security in place when you are at the airport, the security agents may insist on searching every bag, package, and suitcase. Be prepared by arriving at the airport at least a half hour earlier than usual.

### **Flying with holiday food**

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, traveling with food is fairly common. You should be aware that some food items are banned from carry-on baggage because they contain liquids or gels. While you can carry cakes, pastries, and pies with you in the cabin, the following should either be in checked baggage or left at home:

- \* Cranberry sauce
- \* Creamy dips and spreads (cheeses, peanut butter, etc.)
- \* Gravy

- \* Jams, jellies, and syrup
- \* Oils and vinegars
- \* Salad dressing
- \* Salsa
- \* Sauces
- \* Soups
- \* Wine, liquor and beer
- \* Gift baskets with one or more of the above items

There are exceptions for small amounts of gels, liquids, and aerosols, and more generous exceptions for medically related items, but for most items, if you can pour it, pump it, squeeze it, spread it, smear it, spray it, or spill it, you probably can't take it with you.

### **Duty free items**

If you are traveling to or from the US, you should make sure that you don't run into problems with duty free liquids like alcohol, perfume, and cosmetics. Another section of this book provides detailed advice on how to deal with these kinds of duty free items.

### **Traveling with gifts**

If you carry gifts, either in checked or carry-on baggage, make sure they are unwrapped. TSA has to be able to inspect any package and would have to unwrap a gift to do so. You can ship wrapped gifts ahead of time or wait until you arrive at your destination to wrap them.

### **Baggage issues**

There are three baggage issues that become important during the holidays. First, most US airlines are charging you for every checked bag, so using carry-ons only will save you some money. Second, if you do check one or more bags, be prepared to deal with a lost, stolen, or damaged bag. That means if it is valuable to you and you can't deal with having it lost or stolen, keep it with you on your person or in your carry-on bag. That includes things like money, jewelry, medicine, passports, eyeglasses, and laptop computers.

The third potential problem is that if there is no space in the overhead bins, you may be forced to have your carry-on bag checked. If this happens, be prepared to take out any valuables from your carry-on before a cabin crew member or a gate agent takes it away.

### **Unaccompanied children**

If you have a child who will be traveling alone, you should be aware of your airline's specific rules on this kind of travel. Travel by unaccompanied children is covered elsewhere in this ebook.

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## **Advice on Using Portable Electronic Devices**

As the technology of personal electronic devices for entertainment, work, and personal communications evolves, airline passengers have an increasing number of options for using them on the plane. With these options come issues such as when a passenger can use these devices, and perhaps more importantly, when a passenger should show good judgment by not using these devices. As the ongoing debate over the use of cell phones in flight has shown, there are very strong opinions as to what kinds of activities and behaviors will be tolerated by other passengers.

### **What is a personal electronic device?**

A personal electronic device (PED) is an electronic device, typically battery powered, that is both portable and designed to be used by a single person. It includes a wide range of devices, including digital watches, cellular phones, MP3 players, multimedia players like the iPod, and personal computers.

### **Why is their use restricted or even banned on aircraft?**

All electronic devices run on electricity, and have the capacity to produce electromagnetic radiation that may interfere with an aircraft's communications and navigation equipment. Interference can happen with a device like a cell phone or a wireless mouse, which are both designed to transmit a radio signal. It can also happen with devices that are not designed to broadcast a signal, but which may still radiate electromagnetic energy and interfere with aircraft systems. The FAA and other regulatory bodies around the world allow airlines to determine if or when passengers can use PEDs. Airlines may have additional rules on PED use in the aircraft.

### **When a passenger can use a personal electronic device**

While the FAA prohibits the in-flight use of devices that broadcast a signal, passengers are allowed to use these kinds of devices during some portions of a flight. The following guidelines reflect both the restrictions placed on PEDs by the FAA and by many airlines, both inside and outside of the US:

**Devices that can be operated at all times** - implanted medical devices such as pacemakers, electronic nerve stimulators; other small medical devices like hearing aids, and digital watches.

**Devices that can be operated before the cabin doors are closed and after landing** - Cell phones, pagers, devices that can send or receive email or text messages, and other small personal electronic devices.

**Devices that can be operated during cruise** - Typically, all personal electronic devices, other than those specifically banned at all times, can be used once the aircraft reaches 10,000 feet (about five minutes after takeoff) until the approach phase (about 15 minutes before landing). This includes portable computers, handheld phones in "game" or "airplane" mode, digital cameras, DVD or CD players, portable computer games, calculators, PDAs, and other portable media devices.

**Devices that can't be used in the aircraft at any time** - AM or FM radios, two-way radios, televisions, scanners, remote controlled devices, wireless laptop accessories like a mouse, wireless headphones, or other devices which can transmit a signal. If the

transmission function can be turned off, that device can be used in flight.

### **Passenger behavior and electronic devices**

Airline policies, and especially the cabin crew on your flight, usually are quite clear about when portable electronic devices can and cannot be used on an aircraft. What is not quite as clear is what is an acceptable use of these devices. Federal laws may affect when you can use a personal electronic device, but airline policies and social conventions may limit how you can use your device. Avoiding the potential embarrassment of having a flight attendant asking you to turn off your device, or avoiding the wrath of your fellow passengers, is easy if you follow these common sense suggestions for appropriate behavior involving portable electronic devices:

**Avoid making excessive noise** - When playing music or videos, use headphones or earphones. For other devices that don't have a headphone jack, turn off the audio. If that is not possible, don't use the device. If you are on the phone, there's no need to speak loudly enough to be heard across the cabin. If you want to use some kind of voice recording device during the flight is within the rules, exercise some judgment and don't do it loudly or for long periods.

**Avoid displaying inappropriate images** - These kinds of images generally include depictions of sexual activity, sexually suggestive nudity, material depicting extreme acts of violence, or other images that could be upsetting to other passengers. In the US, with very few exceptions, violent, disturbing, or sexually explicit material is legal to own. The problems come when one person's freedom to watch almost anything imaginable runs counter to an airline's desire to provide an acceptable environment for all of its passengers. The inside of an airliner is not a private space where passengers are free to watch what they please. Most flight attendants would likely take a common sense approach and won't do anything about what people are viewing unless it is disturbing other passengers.

**Don't photograph people without their permission** - Inside an aircraft, there is a certain expectation of privacy. While it may be tempting to shoot a funny picture or video of that snoring passenger across the aisle, don't do it without asking first.

**Don't photograph unaccompanied children** - It is customary to get a parent or guardian's permission before photographing a child, but that is not possible with a child traveling alone. Furthermore, to other passengers and to the crew, a person taking pictures or shooting a video of an unaccompanied child may look either creepy or suspicious.

### **Your personal privacy and electronic devices**

When flying domestically in the US, TSA may inspect computers and other electronic devices for explosives and other hazardous or banned items, but they will not confiscate them, scan them, or even turn them on as part of their normal duties. Should anyone at a TSA checkpoint attempt to confiscate your electronic device or gain your passwords or other information, please to see a supervisor or screening manager immediately.

When entering or leaving the US, Customs and Border Enforcement officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with customs, immigration, and other federal laws, and may examine or even confiscate computers, digital storage devices, and other electronic devices. This can happen even if they don't have any evidence that you are

breaking the law.

### **The First Amendment and PEDs**

In the US, the First Amendment of the Constitution forms the basis of laws and traditions when it comes to freedom of speech, which includes the right of adults to possess or view most, but not all, forms of sexually oriented material. One of the few limitations on speech is in the area of obscene material, specifically material that has been legally determined to be sexually explicit, offensive to conventional standards of decency, and lacking in serious literary, scientific, artistic, or political value.

While it may be difficult for the average person to identify obscene material, one type that is very easy to spot is child pornography, which is any kind of visual depiction of a person under the age of 18 engaged in sexually explicit conduct. The conduct does not have to involve either sexual acts or nudity. This kind of material is illegal for anyone in the United States to view, possess, or publish.

If you are on an airplane and you see what appears to be images or videos depicting child pornography, bring it to the attention of a cabin crew member immediately. If this is not possible, and you are arriving at a US airport, contact a law enforcement representative after you land. If you are landing at a non-US airport, use your best judgment as to whether you should report what you saw.

### **Personal privacy and text-based material**

When you are on the plane and using your personal electronic device, you are free to do what you like so long as no one else is bothered by it, or if no one has any business finding out what you are doing. For example, if you're reading a book using your iPad or Kindle, with nothing but text displayed on your device, it's reasonable to expect that another passenger shouldn't be looking over your shoulder and reading what is on your device. If this passenger finds your reading material offensive, that is their problem. Whether you are reading the Koran, the Unabomber Manifesto, or the AirSafe.com Baggage and Security Guide, it's no one's business but your own.

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## What Is Fear of Flying?

Fear of flying is a complex psychological issue, one that has been made more complex by the security concerns of the last few years. There are many books, videos, and other resources that deal with the fear of flying, so deciding what may work for you may be a difficult process. The resources on this page and on this web site will give you an idea of what fear of flying is, what you can do to deal with it, and how passengers can conquer the fear of flying.

Without getting too technical, fear of flying, is an anxiety disorder. Such fears can come about during a flight, or even well before a person gets to the airport. Often, the fear has more to do with elements of the flying experience that has little or nothing to do with the risks associated with the flight. Depending on the person, the fear of flying includes one or more of the following fears or concerns:

- \* Heights
- \* Being over water or having the aircraft land in water
- \* Darkness (flying at night)
- \* The unknown
- \* Airline accidents, hijackings, bombings, and other attacks
- \* Enclosed or crowded space
- \* Being idle for long periods of time
- \* Loss of personal freedom
- \* The security screening process
- \* Turbulence and other weather conditions
- \* The unfamiliar sights, sounds, and sensations of a normal flight
- \* Loss of control, or being dependent on technology or people
- \* Issues from past psychological or physical trauma

Signs you may be afraid of flying include becoming anxious in elevators, having panic attacks before getting on a plane, or going out of your way to avoid air travel.

### **How many people are afraid of flying?**

The airline industry is clearly aware of the fear of flying and how it affects the traveling public. Research is somewhat sparse, with one of the most important studies on fear of flying dates back to 1980, when two Boeing researchers found that 18.1% adults in the U.S. was afraid to fly, and that another 12.6% of adults experienced anxiety when they fly. In short, about one in three adult Americans were afraid to fly. The study was also interesting in that it provided details about why they avoided flying. About half reported that fear was the reason, but only about six percent considered flying unsafe. A more recent poll conducted by Newsweek Magazine in 1999 found that 50% of the adults surveyed who flew on commercial airlines were frightened at least sometimes.

### **How does fear of flying affect people?**

Every person responds to fear of flying differently. A common reaction is to avoid flying as much as possible. There are a number of celebrities, including John Madden of video game and NFL football fame, who go out of their way to arrange their personal and professional lives to avoid flying. Other reactions include the kind of physical reactions associated with a white-knuckle flyer, such as sweating, rapid heartbeat and breathing,

and nausea. Dealing with the stress by seeking answers to common questions about airline safety can have a positive effect on passengers, but doing things like using drugs or alcohol deal with the experience can lead to a passenger being abusive to other passengers, the cabin crew, or to airline representatives.

### **Best fear of flying quote**

On 16 February 1999, director Barry Sonnenfeld, whose films include Men in Black, Men in Black II, and Wild, Wild West, escaped injury when the Gulfstream II executive jet he was riding ran off the runway at the Van Nuys, CA airport, crashed into several nearby aircraft, and caught fire. Sonnenfeld and the three crew members escaped injury, but the aircraft was seriously damaged. After the accident, Sonnenfeld was quoted as saying that "The weird thing is that I hate to fly, and the quote that I give people is that every time I get off a plane, I view it as a failed suicide attempt."

### **Statistics and the fear of flying**

Often, the aviation safety experts point to the statistics associated with flying risk to show how flying is safe and that passengers should not be afraid. For most who have anxieties associated with flying, these statistics are meaningless because in most cases, the fear is not associated with flight risks. In other words, risk and safety are two different things, and you can't use risk statistics to convince someone that flying is safe. Even if the chance of something bad happening is a million to one, most people are worried about whether their flight is going to be the one that doesn't end well.

### **How to conquer fear of flying**

If fear of flying is affecting you in a way that you don't like, there is no reason to accept it as normal. If you want to take positive steps to deal with it, there are plenty of options available. One of the first steps to take is to recognize that you may have a problem. The Fear of Flying Warning Signs section in this ebook has a very basic checklist to indicate if you may have significant anxieties associated with flying. You can also visit [AirSafe.com](http://AirSafe.com) and review the story behind the [SOAR fear of flying program](#), one of the few programs designed to help people deal with fear of flying that is actually designed and led by an airline pilot, Capt. Tom Bunn, who is also a trained therapist. You can also [click here for more information or to order the SOAR program](#) on its web site. If you use the coupon code AIRSAFEBOOK when you order, you will get a 20% discount on SOAR's most comprehensive programs.

### **Recommended fear of flying resources**

Licensed therapist and airline pilot Captain Tom Bunn offers a variety of fear of flying courses that can help you deal with the stress and anxiety that comes with a fear of flying, including the following:

- \* Fear of Flying App for iPad or iPhone
- \* Videos and other products from the SOAR Fear of Flying Program
- \* Additional Fear of Flying Resources from Capt. Tom Bunn

For more information, please visit [fear.airsafe.com](http://fear.airsafe.com).

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## **Fear of Flying Warning Signs and Solutions**

Fear of flying is not just about flying, it could also be about some part of the flying experience that is unrelated to airplanes, but closely related to one or more situations that may make you stressful or anxious. Not all of these symptoms below look like they could be due to fears or anxieties around flying. However, the act of flying may make it difficult or impossible to avoid having to face these stressful situations. For example, if you have a fear of enclosed spaces and get dizzy when you are in an elevator, you can always get out at the next stop. In an airplane, that next stop may be hours away, and the amount of stress that builds up over that time can be tremendous. Whether you are a veteran passenger, or if you have never flown before, the following list may help you identify whether you have a fear of flying problem.

### **You may have a fear of flying if:**

- \* You don't like being in enclosed or crowded spaces.
- \* You don't like being around strangers.
- \* You would rather be in control of a situation, and you don't like to be dependent on technology or on other people to protect you.
- \* You like your personal freedom and don't like it when people tell you what to do, or what not to do.
- \* You have a fear of heights.
- \* You have a fear of being over water.
- \* Flying, or even the thought of flying, makes you tense, or leads to headaches, nausea, fatigue, or other physical discomfort.
- \* You have a fear of the dark or a fear of being out at night.
- \* You don't like invasions of privacy, especially searches of your belongings or physical searches of your body.
- \* You are very concerned about the risks of death or injury from aircraft accidents or from hijackings or other deliberate attacks on an aircraft.
- \* You don't like being idle for long periods of time.
- \* You experience sudden or prolonged panic attacks when you fly or when you are about to get on an airplane.
- \* You arrange your life to limit the amount of flying that you do, or you avoid flying altogether.
- \* You become easily angered by others when you fly.
- \* The sounds and activities associated with a normal flight bother you.
- \* You are concerned about turbulence and other weather conditions.
- \* You are afraid of the unknown.

When you have to face these fears and anxieties over a long period of time, for example, during a flight, or even during the weeks leading up to the flight, your reactions may include actions such as self-medicating with alcohol or drugs, or other actions that are related to the stress of flying. If you have one or more of these symptoms, it may be worth your while to do some personal research on the subject. The links below may be a good start.

### **Dealing with your fear of flying**

Many people who have trouble with flying have tried "everything" on their own, tried therapy, tried medication, or even tried one or more fear of flying programs. They still have hope but they are very doubtful that anything will work. That doubt may be erased with a better approach. One of the approaches that I think works well is the SOAR program from airline captain and licensed therapist Tom Bunn. He has been directly involved with understanding and treating flying related anxieties since 1980 when he became part of the first fear of flying at a major U.S. airline. Two years later in 1982, Captain Bunn founded SOAR to help passengers overcome their fear of flying by helping them to understand their anxieties, and more importantly how to overcome them. For more on the SOAR program, and for other information about fear of flying, [please visit SOAR](#).

**Save 20% on SOAR products**

If you decide to buy any of the products offered by SOAR, simply use the coupon code AIRSAFEBOOK when ordering. This code is good until the end of 2013. Note that if you are ordering after this code expired, contact us at [tcurtis@airsafe.com](mailto:tcurtis@airsafe.com), and we will send you a new coupon code.

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## **About AirSafe.com**

The site was created in July 1996 by Dr. Todd Curtis to provide the aviation community and the flying public with timely and useful information about airline safety and airline security, with a focus on crashes that kill airline passengers. Over the years, the site has expanded its role by adding significant information and resources related to baggage issues, airline complaints, and fear of flying. AirSafe.com has also expanded its reach by creating a variety of information resources, including the following:

### **The AirSafe.com News**

[www.airsafenews.com](http://www.airsafenews.com)

This site features news and commentary about airline safety, airline security, plane crash updates, and airline policy developments. The articles also highlight problems passengers have with airline customer service representatives, airport security, baggage handling, and other travel hassles.

### **The Conversation at AirSafe.com podcast**

[podcast.airsafe.com](http://podcast.airsafe.com)

This audio and video podcast series features discussions of critical and timely issues related to aviation safety and aviation security. You can subscribe to the podcast using an RSS feed or through iTunes.

### **FlightsGoneBad.com**

[www.flightsgonebad.com](http://www.flightsgonebad.com)

This site features complaints from the AirSafe.com airline complaint system, as well as from other sources, that highlight problems passengers have with airline customer service, airport security, baggage handling, and other travel hassles.

### **The AirSafe.com YouTube channel**

[video.airsafe.com](http://video.airsafe.com)

Features several years worth of AirSafe.com videos, including analyses of accident investigations, and selected episodes of the video podcast.

### **Connect with AirSafe.com**

There are a number of ways to keep in touch with AirSafe.com, including Twitter, Facebook, and a mailing list:

**Twitter:** [twitter.airsafe.com](https://twitter.com/airsafe.com)

**Facebook:** [facebook.airsafe.com](https://facebook.com/airsafe.com)

**Mailing list:** [subscribe.airsafe.com](https://subscribe.airsafe.com)

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## **About the Author**

Dr. Todd Curtis is a published author who in 1996 created the Web's most popular airline safety site, [AirSafe.com](http://AirSafe.com). He holds a PhD in aviation risk assessment from the Union Institute, as well as engineering degrees from MIT, the University of Texas, and Princeton. His aviation safety work has been featured by numerous news organizations, including the New York Times, and he has appeared on CNN, CBS, Fox News, Discovery Channel, Al Jazeera, the BBC, and National Public Radio. This book highlights some of the most popular subjects covered in AiSafe.com, AirSafeNews.com, and other sites created by Dr. Curtis. Previously, he has published a number of technical papers in the areas of airline safety and aviation risk assessment and authored the 2000 book *Understanding Aviation Safety Data*. In 2007 he also published the online safety book [\*Parenting and the Internet\*](#), which was updated in 2011 for the ebook version.

### ***Other Books by Todd Curtis***

[AirSafe.com Baggage and Security Guide](#)

[Parenting and the Internet](#)

[The AirSafe.com Podcasting Production Manual](#)

[Understanding Aviation Safety Data](#)

### ***Connect with Dr. Curtis online***

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