

Airline Security

Ours is a changing world, and recent events have caused people the world over to take on new security measures, both personally and on a corporate level. Traveling to a foreign country, and even within your own country, has become more stringent with enhanced security requirements.

To beef up security and enhance customer service, many airlines, like TSA, are now conducting individual passenger screening at security checkpoints. TSA staff and screening equipment are concentrated at these checkpoints to perform random searches. Every passenger is required to have a boarding pass and photo identification in order to pass through a security gate. Tickets and ticket confirmations are longer accepted as valid identification at these checkpoints.

Many airlines now offer four methods of purchasing a boarding pass. New and convenient options include using the curbside check-in option, the airline's self-service ticket kiosk in the airport lobby, and the opportunity to purchase and print the boarding pass directly from your airline website. Of course, you can also pick up your boarding pass at the airline's ticket counter in the airport.

Check with your airline or travel agent to confirm the time you should arrive at the airport. It's also a good idea to confirm that there are parking lots available at the airport, or if shuttle service might be required.

Double-check to make sure that you have all of your valuables with you, as well as the documents required for boarding. Make sure that you have your boarding pass or ticket confirmation ready, as well as a piece of government-issued photo identification such as a driver's license or passport. If you have a medical implant or other device that can trigger the security alarm system, make sure that you have certified documentation from your doctor. Remove any prohibited items, such as pocketknives, before going through airport security.

It's a good idea to stay on the alert at all times. Keep close watch on your luggage, carry-on bags and other belongings. Never agree to carry a parcel for a stranger. If you find unattended bags at the airport, report it to a security officer rather than trying to pick them up yourself. If you see any individual that looks or acts suspicious, point it out to airline security. More than ever before, airline security is very serious business. Never joke about having bombs or firearms on board a plane or at security. The mere mention of such items can lead to lengthy questioning and possible expulsion from the airport.

You have definite rights as an airline passenger, but remember that this is a commercial service and your agreement may be subject to changes. In the case of a delayed flight, airlines will usually try to accommodate passengers by offering a seat aboard the next available flight. Rescheduling your flight on another airline is also an option, but there may be cancellation policies in effect.

Airlines typically overbook flights so double check your reservations to make sure you're guaranteed a seat. When a particular flight is overbooked, the airline will ask for volunteers to wait and board the next flight, and may offer cash or a free trip as an incentive. If there are no volunteers and you are involuntarily bumped, the airline will reserve another flight and you will be compensated for the inconvenience. If you fail to confirm your reservation or meet the check-in deadline, and if the plane has fewer than six available seats, no reward is offered for involuntary bumping.

You can easily avoid boarding hassles if you know your rights as a passenger and understand the airline terms and conditions for boarding. For your own safety and the security of airline personnel and other passengers, you need to take extra caution to avoid inevitable circumstances.

Being well informed is the ticket to enjoying a safe, secure and pleasurable flight.