



Hey, don't even think about it

If you plan to fly on busy holiday weekends, or at any other time, you'll save delays if you obey the rules. According to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), there are several categories of restricted objects you may or may not take with you on your flight.

Some are totally banned, others must be only in checked baggage and less-dangerous others may be taken in carry-on bags. This list contains just the general rules, and TSA is continually changing and updating them. For air passengers planning their flights, it's a sensible idea to continually check the latest information so that their check-in process will go as smoothly and trouble-free as possible.

TOTALLY BANNED ITEMS

They include such potentially dangerous items such as gunpowder products, dynamite, blasting caps, fireworks, flares, plastic explosives and grenades. Parents traveling with children should note that the ban also applies to toys or models that closely resemble any of the above items.

Flammable Items: Any types of gasoline, alcohol or other liquid products that could ignite spontaneously or quickly. Exceptions are prescription items containing alcohol. They may be allowed if sealed in a proper, labeled container. Strike-anywhere matches are not allowed.

Containers where ingredients are under heavy, potentially-explosive pressure are banned. This applies to aggressive and self-protection products, such as mace, tear gas and pepper spray. Some hygienic aerosols are permitted if properly labeled and in small plastic containers of three ounces or smaller. In most cases, passengers with small personal oxygen tanks may not take them if the aircraft can provide the service.

Poisonous liquids: These include acids, drain cleaners, peroxides, weed killers, fertilizers and other corrosive fluids.

ALLOWED ONLY IN CHECKED BAGS

Sporting Goods: Items than could potentially be used as weapons aboard the aircraft, such as all types of knives, sports bats and sticks, archery equipment, golf clubs and pool cues are not permitted aboard.

Firearms: If the passenger has proper registration, unloaded weapons, ammunition and display models of weapons may be checked, but not brought into the cabin area at all, including in carry-on bags.

Tools: Large tools need to be kept in checked bags.

ALLOWED IN CARRY-ON BAGS

Tools: Some smaller tools that do not have sharp edges are permitted in carry-ons.

Matches and lighters: A single small folder of safety matches, as well as a personal lighter, are permitted.

Of course, such a complex list can never be complete, because it is constantly updated and changed by TSA. Before you pack your bags and head for the airport, first be sure to check the latest information from by going to www.tsa.gov.

For example, following instructions from TSA, airline security inspectors now screen passengers scheduled for international travel more thoroughly by checking detailed personal information, such as full name, passport, credit card information and drivers' license. The names on all should match exactly, so if you plan international flights, it's advisable to use your full name ... no nickname ... when applying for those documents.

This screening process may happen to passengers at least twice: when first entering the overseas flight area of the airport and when going through the security line. Along with ID and passports, passengers must immediately show boarding passes. If they book one-way flights, the investigation process gets much more thorough.

TSA has established strict rules about liquids, gels and aerosols in carry-on bags. There are some allowed, including various types of medication. It is advisable to carry doctors' prescriptions to show screeners who inspect bottles of pills and liquids. Most are restricted to from three to six ounces. If you have larger bottles or containers, check them with your baggage.

As with most domestic flights before boarding, for overseas air travel you're required to take off your shoes and outer clothing, as well as emptying your pockets of pens, glasses and all other articles with metal in them, including belts. Put them in the plastic tray for going through x-ray.

To get your cell phone, laptop computer, camera and other electronic articles through security, it may be better that they go into a plastic tray on the moving belt to x-ray, instead of packing them in your carry-on bag. Screeners often decide to inspect those items closely, and if they need to take you aside and open your bag after the x-ray process, it could cause a five- to

15-minute delay. If time is running out for you to get to the boarding gate, this can be frustrating.

On overseas flights, expect delays or worse if you're carrying anything that could be classified as a totally banned item on an overseas flight. Check the latest TSA listings and, if you have any question about them, just leave them at home.

Don't carry on your person, in checked bags or carry-ons anything metal, wood or plastic that has a sharp blade and/or point. Don't have screwdrivers or other hand tools, or anything that could be used as a club. Don't have anything liquid, powder or plastic that could be explosive and/or flammable.

TSA rules for passengers planning international flights are virtually the same as those for those for air travel within the United States. However, when you go through the tough security screening, as well as the required passport and other paperwork, the process will be much more thorough. You'll make it less stressful if you're updated on all the TSA requirements and comply with them.