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Sliding through Airport Security

By Maxine Greco

Sliding through Airport Security

You've all seen the lines to get through airport security. It's become more and more congested. Passengers haven't taken the time to read the rules and that slows everyone down and makes the boarding process more frustrating.

First and foremost, make sure your carry on bag is the correct size. Many airlines have different regulations; so always check with the airline before packing. As a rule of thumb, most airlines allow two items to be carried on. One is a personal bag, such as a briefcase, laptop, camera bag, or purse. The other is a 45" length, height and width total dimensions of the bag to fit in the overhead. Some of the airlines also have a weight restriction on your carryon bag. If your bag cannot be carried on, keep in mind that the only lock you are permitted to use is the TSA lock.

Next, be sure you are not packing any prohibited items in your bag. Sharp objects or weapons are just common sense. However, many of the airlines are now allowing scissors with blades less than 4" long, screwdrivers less than 7" long, tools less than 7" long, including wrenches and pliers, knitting needles, tweezers and nail clippers. You can obtain the complete list from your airline or from their website.

You have to remember that you will personally have to walk through a metal detector. Keep that in mind when you are getting dressed for your trip. You will have to remove belts if they have a metal buckle. Also your watch, and most other jewelry except rings and/or small earrings will need to be removed before going through the metal detector. Additionally, most shoes have some sort of metal reinforcement and they will also have to be removed. With the exception of your shoes, it's easiest to put all of these items in your carry bag, and put them on after going through security. Always be sure to bring medical proof along with you if you have had any type of surgery that would use metal pins or parts. This is imperative because you would have no other way of proving why the machine keeps identifying metal on your person.

The easiest way to approach going through airport security is to be organized. Security will

occasionally do random searches, and overstuffing your bag makes it harder for them to look through your bag. It also makes it more difficult for you to close the bag and continue on your way. Many experienced travelers pack in special packing cubes so that all of their underwear, socks and sleepwear are together. There are also plastic lined cases to keep your toiletries separate. Security personnel may also ask to see an item that showed up on the x-ray machine. If your bag is organized, you'll find the item they have asked to look at much faster and easier.

You'll notice that more and more passengers are carrying on bags. Because the overhead compartments of the plane become so full, it's important to put identification tags on both handles of your cases. It's easy for someone to mistake your bag for his or her own because your bag will not always be able to fit in the compartment over your own seat. There is a new line of luggage called Mosaic. It has a monogram plate for initials on the bottom of the case. This is a great idea since the bag is clearly identified from the back end and that is what you see first in an overhead compartment.

These tips should get you on your way quickly and efficiently. Have a great travel experience.

Maxine Greco has been in the luggage and travel industry for over 35 years. She is currently working at

Village Luggage & Gifts

Heightened Airport Security

By Laura Quarantiello

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SURVIVING AIRPORT SECURITY

What to expect at the airport

By Laura Quarantiello

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The new airport security rules, instituted in the wake of the September 11 tragedies, are not only causing longer lines and more delays, they're also confusing travelers. How many bags can I carry aboard? Are golf clubs considered weapons now? What about nail clippers? Will airport screeners be searching every nook and cranny of my bags? Do I really have to show up two hours early for my flight? The anxiety is enough to make you take the train. Here are some answers

to help you out.

Yes, your nail clippers will be confiscated. The airlines have tightened the rules on what is considered a potential weapon. Nail clippers (with metal file), pocket knives, razors, scissors, and even corkscrews now make the list of no-no's. Leave these in your checked baggage or at home. Don't try to bring golf clubs or ski poles aboard, either; they won't be allowed in the passenger cabin.

Only one carry-on per person. The FAA is restricting the number of bags you can carry aboard to one, plus one personal item like a purse or briefcase. Don't try to take more, it will just cause a longer delay.

Increased security means everything gets searched. Your carry-on luggage will be opened and inspected for contraband. To speed things up, pack everything within your luggage in clear plastic bags or in see-through containers. Make sure radios or computers have fresh batteries installed in case screeners want to test them. And watch out when carrying baby powder or other powdered materials like vitamins or baby formula; some airlines are turning these away.

Always arrive early. As air travel returned to normal in the days following the terrorist attacks, delays of up to two hours

were not uncommon. Things are running a bit smoother now, but always leave a little extra time, just in case. All it takes is one small problem to hold up the entire line. So allow at least an hour for all flights, an hour and a half or even two hours is better.

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A San Marcos, CA freelancer, "Ms. Q" has written a wide variety of books. Her latest is "Air-Ways – The Insider's Guide to Air Travel"



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