



PRESS RELEASE

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TSA expects Thanksgiving to be record-breaking at airports in Upstate New York

Top tips: Get to the airport early, come prepared for checkpoint screening

ALBANY, NY -- The number of passengers expected to fly this Thanksgiving holiday is expected to be [record-breaking with more than 26.8 million passengers and crew](#) members traveling through security screening checkpoints nationwide from Nov. 22 through Dec. 2. Travelers need to be well prepared and need to get to the checkpoint two hours before their domestic flight and three hours prior to an international flight as airports will be active and congested.

TSA expects to screen 4% more passengers this holiday travel season than last year, which is why it is important for passengers to arrive early--to ensure that they have ample time to account for traffic, parking and navigating through the airport. It is advisable to check-in for a flight ahead of time, either on the air carrier's website or mobile app, to allow even more time to get through security and relax at the gate.

"TSA checkpoints will be fully staffed at all Upstate New York airports from Albany across the state to Buffalo," said Bart R. Johnson, TSA's Federal Security Director for the Upstate New York airports. "The officers assigned to the airports are very dedicated and they will continue to deploy [layers of security](#), both seen and unseen, to ensure the safety of the public."

While TSA concentrates on aviation security, passengers can assist by coming to the airport prepared.

The TSA Modernization Act, enacted by Congress, requires TSA to limit the use of TSA Pre✓® lanes to only individuals with "known traveler numbers." As such, "the likelihood of non-enrolled passengers receiving TSA Pre✓® on their boarding pass has significantly decreased," Johnson said.

Passengers who are not enrolled members of the popular [TSA Pre✓®](#) program with a known traveler number should not expect to be provided with TSA Pre✓® benefits and instead those travelers should consider enrolling in the program, which allows travelers to wear their shoes, belts and lightweight jackets when coming through the checkpoint and also enables them to keep their electronics and their [3-1-1 bags](#) in their carry-on bags. There are [TSA Pre✓® enrollment centers](#) located across the state including ones in Albany, Syracuse, Oswego, Rochester and West Seneca.

Thousands of individuals who signed up for TSA Pre✓® five years ago are now eligible to [renew their TSA Pre✓® membership online](#), or – if you still don't have TSA Pre✓® – enrollment is easy and takes about 10 minutes.

TSA has also been rolling out an initiative called “blended lanes,” which specifically addresses a common concern from individuals enrolled in TSA Pre✓®. Blended lanes provide TSA Pre✓® screening to confirmed TSA Pre✓® members and their accessible property at smaller sized airports that do not have a dedicated TSA Pre✓® lane, and at larger airports during off-peak hours when TSA Pre✓® passenger volume is too low for dedicated TSA Pre✓® lanes.

Below are some travel preparation tips to make the security checkpoint experience go smoothly during the holidays – and throughout the year:

- Unpack your bag before you pack it – at home. By unpacking your bag fully and re-packing it before coming to the airport, travelers will avoid bringing items to the airport that are prohibited past the security checkpoint. This includes knives, power tools and tools over seven inches in length; stun guns; martial arts weapons and more.
- Make sure electronics are accessible. Travelers can organize their carry-on bag so electronics larger than a cell phone can be quickly and easily accessed when at the security checkpoint. All personal electronic devices larger than a cell phone should be placed in bins for X-ray screening with nothing on top or below, to allow for a clear X-ray image, similar to how laptops have been screened for several years.
- Contact TSA to find out what can go in a checked or carry-on bag. Reach out to [@AskTSA](#) on social media. Questions about what can be carried through a security checkpoint can be answered if the question is tweeted to [@AskTSA](#) or sent via Facebook Messenger. [@AskTSA](#) is staffed weekdays from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET and weekends and holidays from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. Or visit www.tsa.gov any time of the day or night to access the “[What Can I Bring?](#)” feature on the top right-hand corner of the TSA homepage. Travelers can also [download the free myTSA app](#), which also has the “What Can I Bring?” feature right at your fingertips.
- Call [TSA Cares](#). Travelers or families of travelers with disabilities and/or medical conditions may call the TSA Cares helpline toll free at 855-787-2227 with any questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint as well as to arrange for assistance at the checkpoint. It is recommended to call at least 72 hours prior to traveling.

“Please keep in mind that TSA officers will be on duty during the holidays so passengers can enjoy their holidays,” Johnson said. “The TSA women and men are committed to securing the transportation network and serving the traveling public to ensure that all travelers get to their destinations safely.”

This fall is also the perfect time to get a [REAL ID](#)-compliant driver’s license because beginning October of 2020, every air traveler 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID-compliant driver’s license or [another acceptable form of ID](#) to fly within the United States. REAL ID-compliant cards are marked with a star in the upper portion of the card.

Travelers are encouraged to get their REAL ID-compliant license before the end of the year, because next year people are more likely to be caught up in the rush to get a REAL ID that could result in long lines at the DMV offices.

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The Transportation Security Administration was created to strengthen the security of the nation's transportation systems and ensure the freedom of movement for people and commerce. TSA uses a risk-based strategy and works closely with transportation, law enforcement and intelligence communities to set the standard for excellence in transportation security. For more information about TSA, please visit our website at tsa.gov.

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