

# AirSafe.com Baggage and Security Guide

<http://www.airsafe.com/issues/baggage/airsafe-baggage-and-security-guide.pdf>

Because of the evolving security threats to aviation, most countries have many restrictions on what you can carry on an airplane, and other security restrictions that affect your air travel experience. However, if you take some time to get familiar with the basic security rules, and to understand what items are not allowed, you'll probably avoid unnecessary stress when you travel by air.

Most of the information in this guide is based on the requirements and restrictions of the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Each country has different security requirements, but much of the information will be similar for air travel throughout the world.

Before you head to the airport, you should take the time to review the following airline and airport security policies to find out whether you can take an item on the aircraft, and whether you are properly prepared for your trip. The following areas will be covered in this guide:

## **General Baggage Restrictions**

- Items That Are Completely Banned
- Items Allowed Only in Checked Baggage
- Items That Are Allowed in Carry-on Bags and the Passenger Cabin
- Things You Should Never Put in Checked Baggage
- Restrictions on Liquids, Gels, and Aerosols in Carry On Baggage
- Exemptions for Liquids, Gels and Aerosols
- Special Rules on Batteries

In addition to information on restricted and prohibited items listed above, this guide has information on several other travel-related topics.

## **Identification Requirements**

## **Tickets and Boarding Passes**

## **The Security Screening Process**

## **Baggage Basics for Checked and Carry-on Baggage**

## **Advice for Traveling with a Laptop**

## **Duty Free Shopping: Liquids, Aerosols, and Gels**

## **Top 10 Baggage Tips**

**Note:** You can also find much of this information at [tsa.airsafe.org](http://tsa.airsafe.org)

# General Baggage Restrictions

In the US, both the TSA and the airlines have baggage rules and restrictions which 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.

## Items That Are Completely Banned

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.

**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.

**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.

### **Items Allowed Only in Checked Baggage**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has prohibited the following items from airplane cabins and carry-on baggage but 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 step ladder 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.

### **Items That Are Allowed in Carry-on Bags and the Passenger Cabin**

There are a number of items that could be considered hazardous or dangerous that are actually allowed in the passenger cabin, including your carry-on baggage:

**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.

**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.

## 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.

## Restrictions on Liquids, Gels, and Aerosols in Carry-on Baggage

On 10 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:

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

**Note:** 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.

### Exemptions for Liquids, Gels and Aerosols

- 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.
- Liquids including water, juice, or liquid nutrition or gels for passengers with a disability or medical condition.
- Life-support and life-sustaining liquids such as bone marrow, blood products, and transplant organs.
- 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.
- 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.
- Baby formula, breast milk, juice or water 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.

If you have liquids, aerosols, or gels that meet these exceptions, they can be in containers larger than 3.4 fluid ounces (100 ml), and do not have to be inside of a quart sized plastic bag, but do have to be declared at the security checkpoint.

Once past the security checkpoint, you are free to buy liquid gel products of any size within the secure areas of the airport terminal and take them on board.

**Note:** 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.

## **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.

## 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. The TSA 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. Examples of types of ID that are not accepted include an employee badge, credit card, or library card.

### 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.

# 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 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](#).

# Baggage Basics for Checked and Carry-on Items

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.

## 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.
- 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](http://www.TSA.gov) for details.

- Make sure that your checked 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.

## Advice for Traveling 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.
- 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.

# Carry-on Baggage Advice

A reasonable approach to carry-on baggage is 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, so be prepared to do so.

## Think Safe

- Carry-on items which may fall from overhead bins can injure you or other passengers during flight or in the event of an emergency evacuation.  
See also the article [Head Injury Risks from Overhead Baggage](#).
- 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. Retrieving personal items may impede the safe evacuation of passengers.
- Remember, be safety conscious when stowing your carry-on items.

## **Duty-free Shopping: Liquids, Gels, and Aerosols**

If you are traveling internationally and make a duty-free purchase of alcohol, 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.

Most countries have implemented strict regulations regarding liquids 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.

The rules for taking duty-free liquids, aerosols, and gels are different for each country. Passengers departing the US can use special tamper-evident bags for duty-free liquids purchased in the secure area of U.S. airports. Keep in mind that these tamper-evident bags will not be accepted in the United States at security checkpoints.

To avoid the risk of having to abandon your liquid duty-free items in the US and abroad, please follow the guidelines below.

### **Traveling to an International Destination from the United States**

Duty-free purchases of liquids of any size made from shops in the secure area of US airports are permitted if you have a nonstop flight to an international destination. If you have a connecting flight outside the US, you may or may not be able to go through the security checkpoints with your purchase depending on the rules of that country. If are not sure what rules apply to you, check with your airline or with the duty free shop for guidance.

### **Returning to the United States from an International Destination**

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

If you are flying to the US and have a connecting flight in the US, liquid duty-free purchases in containers larger than 3.4 fluid ounces (100 ml) must be placed in your checked baggage, even if you have your items in a tamper-resistant bag. Because you will be required to reclaim your checked bags prior to passing through customs inspection, you will have the opportunity to place duty-free liquids into your bags and recheck them for your connection.

## 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. See AirSafe.com's [List of Baggage Resources](#) for general limits on carry-on luggage.

**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 Journal 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. Visit AirSafe.com for its list of [What You Are Not Allowed to Take on an Airplane](#) for more details.

## Thank You for Using AirSafe.com

Thanks for being part of the AirSafe.com audience. Feel free to use these additional resources.

**Main Web site** – [www.airsafe.com](http://www.airsafe.com) - The site features extensive information about airline safety and security, as well as other information of interest to the airline community.

**Latest News** – [AirSafeNews.com](http://AirSafeNews.com) – Features airline safety and security news, new podcast announcements, accident investigation updates, and other information from the AirSafe.com network of online resources.

**Airport Security** – [tsa.airsafe.org](http://tsa.airsafe.org) – Before your next flight, visit AirSafe.com to review common airport security policies to find out what's allowed and what's not allowed on the aircraft.

**Fear of Flying Resources** – [fear.airsafe.org](http://fear.airsafe.org) – Basic background information about fear of flying and suggestions about how a passenger can deal with the fear.

**Podcast** – [podcast.airsafe.org](http://podcast.airsafe.org) – The Conversation at AirSafe.com podcast highlights current airline safety and security issues of high interest. Available on iTunes and other major podcast providers.

**Plane Crash Videos** – [plane-crash-videos.net](http://plane-crash-videos.net) – This is AirSafe.com's collection selected crash videos from around the world, including crashes from airlines, military units, and private aircraft.

**Other Videos** – [video.airsafe.org](http://video.airsafe.org) – Featuring the videos from the Conversation at AirSafe.com podcast, this will take you directly to the AirSafe.com channel on YouTube, where you can review or comment on the most popular videos from the site.

**Airline Complaints** – [FlightsGoneBad.com](http://FlightsGoneBad.com) – Featured complaints from the AirSafe.com Airline Complaint System.

**Celebrity Plane Crashes** – [celebrity.airsafe.org](http://celebrity.airsafe.org) – This is AirSafe.com's collection selected crash videos from around the world, including crashes from airlines, military units, and private aircraft.

## Free Downloads

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