



# Press Release

## TSA firearm catches at checkpoints set 20-year record in first nine months of 2021



WASHINGTON – Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers detected a record number of firearms at airport security checkpoints this year, establishing a 20-year record with three months remaining in the calendar year and fewer passengers traveling due to the pandemic.

By October 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year, TSA officers had stopped 4,495 airline passengers from carrying firearms onto their flights, surpassing the previous record of 4,432 firearms caught at checkpoints in the full calendar year 2019. TSA officers discovered 11 firearms in carry-on bags at airport checkpoints per million passengers screened so far in 2021. This compares to 5 firearms per million passengers in 2019.

“The number of firearms that our TSA officers are stopping at airport checkpoints is alarming,” said TSA Administrator David Pekoske. “Firearms, particularly loaded firearms, introduce an unnecessary risk at checkpoints, have no place in the passenger cabin of an airplane, and represent a very costly mistake for the passengers who attempt to board a flight with them.”

Firearm possession laws vary by state and local government. Passengers can [follow proper packing guidance for firearms](#) in checked baggage and declare them to their airline at check-in. TSA advises that travelers know state and local firearm laws for each point of travel prior to departure to ensure they transport firearms in accordance with applicable law. Airlines may have additional requirements for traveling with firearms and ammunition, so travelers should also contact their airline regarding firearm and ammunition carriage policies prior to arriving at the airport.

When passengers bring firearms to airport checkpoints, TSA will assess a civil penalty that varies by number of previous offenses and whether the firearm was loaded at the time.

The complete [list of penalties](#) is posted on TSA.gov. TSA PreCheck® members caught with a firearm at a TSA checkpoint may lose their expedited screening privileges for three years or more. Firearms are not permitted in the passenger cabin of an airplane; this includes travelers with a concealed weapon permit.

Passengers may travel with firearms in checked baggage when they are unloaded and packed in a locked, hard-sided case. The passenger must declare and present the case with the firearm at the airline check-in counter and inform the airline representative of their intention to travel with the

firearms. Firearms are transported with checked baggage and are placed in the cargo hold of the aircraft.

The reported data represents the number of firearms caught on passengers or in their carry-on bags at the nation's airport security checkpoints. Excluded from the data are improperly packed firearms at checked baggage stations, toys, replicas, and BB guns.

Visit the TSA website for details on [how to properly travel with a firearm](#).

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