



# Press Release

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Near pre-pandemic travel volumes expected to continue through December holidays

*With a smooth start to holiday travel season, TSA provides tips for less stress travel  
Sign up for TSA PreCheck® today to travel with ease later this month*

WASHINGTON – The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screened just under 21 million travelers during the 10-day Thanksgiving holiday. The agency expects high travel volumes into the December holidays and encourages passengers planning to travel this holiday season to sign up for TSA PreCheck® to provide more convenience and save time at the airport.

“We see a strengthening in the airline travel industry toward pre-pandemic levels and our goal is to ensure you as the passenger have a safe and secure flight,” said TSA Administrator David Pekoske. “We work hard with our airport and airline partners to achieve this by ensuring screening operations meet the upcoming demand. I also want to thank our Transportation Security Officers across the country who, each and every day, meet the travel volume demand and help keep airport screening lanes moving to ensure millions of passengers arrive at their destinations safely.”

Holiday travelers may enjoy a smoother screening process by enrolling in [TSA PreCheck](#). Members of the trusted traveler program do not have to remove their shoes, belts, 3-1-1 liquids, laptops, or light jackets. In November, 94% of members waited less than 5 minutes. Those who apply today will likely have their application accepted within 5 days, just in time for the holidays.

The application process is a simple two-step process, which can be started online and at home. 1) [Apply online](#) and schedule an appointment at any of the more than 400 enrollment centers. 2) Attend a 10-minute or less in-person [appointment](#) that includes fingerprinting for a background check and a payment of \$85 for the 5-year membership. Many [credit cards and loyalty programs](#) also reimburse the application fees. Travelers whose membership expired can renew their membership online for \$70 before the holidays at [TSA.gov/PreCheck](#).

In order to keep screening lanes moving quickly throughout the holiday season, travelers should:

- **Be flexible. Airports have rush hours too.** If you want to avoid normal airport rush hours, which are normally between 5-7 a.m. or 4-6 p.m., consider booking your flight outside of those hours. Check all carriers, as they might have other flight options.
- **Pack smart** by [contacting](#) TSA or visiting our [What Can I Bring](#) page before you leave you home.
- **Arrive early** at the security checkpoint: two hours for domestic or three hours for international flights.
- **Follow signs** and verbal direction provided by our Transportation Security Officers (TSO) to help keep screening lanes moving.
- **Be patient** and considerate of others. Our TSOs are working as fast as they can and many travelers are flying for the first time since the pandemic began. In an effort to remind passengers to show gratitude and practice patience with others while traveling, TSA worked with its partners in the development of this [Public Service Announcement about the Gift of Travel](#).
- **Avoid fines** by properly packing your [firearm](#) and respecting our officers, flight crew and other frontline workers. Firearms are prohibited at the checkpoint and in carry-on luggage.
- **Join TSA PreCheck** or renew your existing membership [here](#) before the holidays.

Firearms found at TSA airport security checkpoints continue to trend higher. This year, TSA officers have stopped more than 5,000 firearms at checkpoints – a 20-year record – ensuring they didn't make it into the airport's secure area and the passenger cabin of aircraft. Over 85% of firearms are loaded. In some cases, local law enforcement confiscates firearms at checkpoints and arrests those in possession of a firearm at a TSA checkpoint. TSA [fines](#) passengers caught with firearms at checkpoints up to \$13,910 and suspends their TSA PreCheck membership benefits.

Airline passengers traveling with a firearm must [properly pack it in checked baggage](#) and declare it to their airline.

Since March 2020, TSA has dramatically modified airport security checkpoint operations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to improve social distancing and reduce physical contact. These operational modifications continue in an effort to contain the virus, including the new Omicron variant. These changes include upgraded screening and credential authentication equipment at many airports to help reduce physical contact. The face mask requirement currently in place across the nation's transportation systems is extended through March 18, 2022 and aligns with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance.

In accordance with the President's Executive [Order](#) requiring federal employees to be vaccinated against COVID, 93% of the TSA workforce is in compliance with the vaccine and exemption requirements. About 86% are either partially or fully vaccinated and TSA will continue to work diligently with those who have submitted exemption requests.

Airline travelers may contact TSA directly before their flight with questions on airport screening. General questions can be answered by submitting a question directly to @AskTSA on Twitter and Facebook or by calling (866) 289-9673 between the hours of 8am-11pm Eastern on

weekdays or 9 a.m.-8 p.m. on weekend/holidays. For individuals with special needs, TSA Cares is available via email [here](#) or by calling (855) 787-2227 on weekdays between 8am-11pm or during weekends/holidays between 9 a.m.-8 p.m. EST.

For more information on traveling safely during the holiday season, please visit [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov).

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