



# Press Release

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2023

## **TSA is prepared for high travel volumes this Memorial Day weekend and the summer travel season**

***Agency announces new benefit to TSA PreCheck® membership and continues to deploy checkpoint technology to improve security effectiveness, efficiency and the passenger experience***

**WASHINGTON** — The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is prepared to screen high volumes of passengers at airport security checkpoints nationwide this summer travel season, which begins Memorial Day weekend and runs through Labor Day. The agency forecasts Friday, May 26, to be the busiest day of the long weekend, projecting to screen approximately 2.6 million passengers.

Today, the agency announced that teenagers aged 13-17 may now accompany TSA PreCheck® enrolled parents or guardians through TSA PreCheck screening when traveling on the same reservation and when the TSA PreCheck indicator appears on the teen's boarding pass. Children 12 and under may still accompany an enrolled parent or guardian when traveling through the TSA PreCheck lanes anytime without restriction.

“TSA is ready to handle this summer's anticipated increase in travel. Our staffing levels are better and this is largely due to better pay for all TSA employees which starts on July 1<sup>st</sup>,” said TSA Administrator David Pekoske. “This key action, [supported by the President and Congress](#), enables us, for the first time in TSA's history, to pay our workforce using the same pay scale that applies to other federal employees. As expected, this has already improved our recruiting and retention rates. For passengers, this will mean better overall staffing for all of TSA's activities that support secure and efficient travel and an improved passenger experience. Our strong partnerships with airports and airlines will ensure we are able to anticipate and respond to changes in passenger travel throughout the summer. Passengers can help as well by being prepared, by having their identification ready when they begin screening and checking to make sure they aren't bringing firearms, oversized liquids or any other prohibited item into the checkpoint. One person's actions can delay screening for everyone else.”

Earlier today at a press conference at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens and six airport and airline partners joined Pekoske to discuss their operational preparedness for anticipated summer travel volumes, changes in transportation security and other travel

tips. Industry representatives included Jan Lennon, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport Deputy General Manager for Operations; Nicholas E. Calio, President and CEO, Airlines for America; Kevin M. Burke, President and CEO, Airports Council International – North America; Stephanie K. Gupta, Senior Vice President, Security and Facilitation, American Association of Airport Executives; Paul Doell, Vice President of Government Affairs and Security Policy, National Air Carrier Association; and Drew Jacoby Lemos, Vice President of Government and External Affairs for the Regional Airline Association.

To continue to modernize airport checkpoints, enhance security effectiveness and efficiency and improve the passenger experience, TSA is deploying new technology solutions nationwide. [Credential Authentication Technology \(CAT\)](#) units confirm the authenticity of a passenger's identification credentials, along with their flight details and pre-screening status (such as TSA PreCheck) all without a boarding pass. With CAT, passengers only need to provide their acceptable photo identification to the officer. The second generation of CAT, also called CAT-2, in use at several airports nationwide, has the same capabilities, but is also equipped with a camera that captures a real-time photo of the traveler at the Travel Document Checker podium. CAT-2 compares the traveler's photo on the identification credential against the in-person, real-time photo. Once the CAT-2 confirms the match, a TSA officer will verify and the traveler can proceed to security screening, without ever exchanging a boarding pass. TSA officers may perform additional passenger verification if needed. Photos captured by CAT units are never stored or used for any other purpose than immediate identity verification. Travelers who do not wish to participate in the facial matching process may opt out in favor of an alternative identity verification process without losing their place in line. TSA is committed to protecting passenger privacy, civil rights, civil liberties and ensuring the public's trust as it seeks to improve the passenger experience through its exploration of identity verification technologies.

To date, TSA has deployed 2,054 CAT units to 223 airports. Among those, 238 CAT units represent the second generation (CAT-2) technology. Additionally, [Georgia is the latest state](#) to launch its mobile driver's license (mDL). TSA is able to read the following digital IDs: Arizona, Colorado, Georgia and Maryland mDLs provisioned to Apple Wallet, Utah mDLs stored in the GET Mobile ID app and American Airlines digital ID stored in the Airside Digital Identity app.

TSA is also deploying new state-of-the-art [Computed Tomography \(CT\)](#) units to checkpoints nationwide, which significantly improves scanning and threat detection capabilities for carry-on bags. CT units give TSA officers the ability to review a 3D image of passengers' bags and reduce the need to physically search the contents of the bag. Passengers screened in security lanes with CT units do not need to remove their 3-1-1 liquids or laptops, but they must place every carry-on item, including bags, into a bin for screening. TSA has also deployed 678 CT units to 218 airports nationwide. In April, the agency [announced](#) awards for the procurement and maintenance of additional CT scanners and CAT-2 units for installments at security checkpoints starting this summer.

Based on some of the most recent trends at the nation's airports, TSA recommends the following seven simple tips to get through the TSA security checkpoint quickly and efficiently:

**Tip 1: TSA PreCheck® members: Make sure your Known Traveler Number (KTN) is in your reservation.**

With over 15 million TSA PreCheck members, it is essential that airline reservations have the passenger's correct KTN and date of birth so they can truly "Travel with Ease." Those who fly with multiple airlines should ensure their KTN is updated in each of their airline profiles every time they travel. TSA PreCheck passengers are low-risk travelers who do not need to remove shoes, belts, liquids, food, laptops and light jackets at the TSA checkpoint.

If you aren't yet [enrolled](#) in TSA PreCheck and appreciate faster checkpoint screening, we encourage you to enroll for a five-year membership at a cost of \$78. Most new enrollees receive their KTN within three to five days. Members may [renew membership online](#) up to six months prior to expiration for another five-year term for \$70.

In April, 94% of TSA PreCheck passengers waited less than 5 minutes at the checkpoint. TSA's wait time standards for TSA PreCheck lanes are under 10 minutes and under 30 minutes for standard lanes.

**Tip 2: Pack an empty bag and know before you go.** When airline passengers begin packing for travel with an empty bag, they are less likely to be stopped at the security checkpoint for having prohibited items. Prior to packing that empty bag, check TSA's "[What Can I Bring?](#)" tool to know what is prohibited. Firearms are prohibited at airport security checkpoints and on board aircraft. Passengers may travel with a firearm if they [properly pack the firearm](#) in checked baggage and declare it with the airline at check-in. Airlines may have additional requirements for traveling with firearms and ammunition, so travelers must also contact their airline regarding firearm and ammunition carriage policies prior to arriving at the airport. If passengers bring a firearm to the security checkpoint, [they will face significant penalties](#) to include federal penalties and additional screening.

**Tip 3: Give yourself plenty of time.** Summer travel will be busy, so plan ahead! Give yourself plenty of time to park or return a rental car, take a shuttle to the airport if needed, check-in with your airline, check in bags with the airline and prepare for the security checkpoint. Save time by removing items from pockets and placing them in your carry-on bag, instead of putting items directly into bins at the conveyor belt.

**Tip 4: Be aware of new checkpoint technology and follow guidance from our TSA officers.** TSA uses a variety of security methods to secure our transportation systems. Screening protocols can be unpredictable and may vary from airport to airport depending on available technology and the current threat environment, so it is important to listen and follow officer directions. [Some airports](#) may have installed the new state-of-the-art advanced technology CT scanners. The opening to the X-ray tunnel on a CT unit is slightly smaller than on a traditional X-ray unit so TSA advises travelers not to force larger items into the tunnel, but to ask a TSA officer for assistance. Passengers must also place everything, including bags, into the bin for screening. Passengers are also reminded to bring at maximum one carry-on bag and one personal item through security screening. Some airports have construction underway to install these new CT scanners, and TSA asks passengers to be patient during the screening process.

Before passengers go through the AIT, all items such as wallets, cell phones and all light outerwear must be removed. Light outerwear is defined as an outer layer of clothing with a full front zipper or buttons used to fasten the outer garment, excluding button up shirts. Examples include, but are not limited to, windbreakers and vests, suit/sport coats, blazers and light jackets.

**Tip 5: Respect TSA and other frontline airport and airline employees.** Violence and unruly behavior in the nation's transportation system are not acceptable and results in delays at traveler checkpoints. TSA officers, along with all frontline airport and airline employees and local law enforcement are all working together to ensure safe and secure travel. Assaulting a TSA officer is a federal offense and will result in penalties and/or arrest. Always follow the directions of flight attendants aboard aircraft. They are there for your safety and security.

**Tip 6: Make sure you have an acceptable ID.** Adult passengers 18 years and older must show valid identification at the airport checkpoint in order to travel. [Beginning May 7, 2025, if you plan to use your state-issued ID or license to fly within the U.S., make sure it is REAL ID compliant.](#) If you are not sure if

your ID complies with REAL ID, check with your state department of motor vehicles. For questions on acceptable IDs, go to [TSA.gov](https://www.tsa.gov).

**Tip 7: Contact TSA with questions, compliments, complaints or assistance.** Travelers with questions have [many options for contacting TSA](#). AskTSA is available for live assistance from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. ET via Twitter or Facebook by messaging @AskTSA or by sending a text to “272872” (“AskTSA”). For customer service issues, travelers may reach the TSA Contact Center (TCC) at (866) 289-9673. Individuals with disabilities, medical needs or other special circumstances may request passenger assistance at least 72 hours in advance by contacting our TSA Cares passenger support line at (855) 787-2227. Live assistance for both the TCC and TSA Cares is available weekdays, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET, or weekends and holidays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

For those traveling with children this summer, TSA offers [kid-friendly videos](#) for children packing for their upcoming trip.