



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TSA prepares eastern Idaho for very busy summer air travel season

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho – Officials with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) on Thursday shared that current air travel projections for passengers departing Idaho Falls over the next three months indicate this summer may be the busiest on record for the airport and local TSA operations.

For people who haven't traveled recently, they will immediately notice the ongoing remodel of the Idaho Falls Regional Airport (IDA) terminal. In addition to expanding the airport's footprint, travelers will see a relocated and renovated TSA security checkpoint that allows for more efficient screening operations. The new checkpoint is located to the left of the old location and there is queue space inside as well as outside the checkpoint for travelers who are waiting to be screened.

"TSA is excited to be part of the growth at Idaho Falls Regional Airport. With the number of travelers departing IDA this summer surpassing what we saw in 2019, TSA is ready to meet the challenge and serve the travel needs of the east Idaho community," said TSA Federal Security Director for Idaho Andy Coose.

The ongoing airport construction project will add additional gates at IDA, eventually doubling its flight capacity. Two new airlines - American Airlines and Alaska Airlines – will start service next month, adding new non-stop destinations for travelers departing IDA. By summer, five airlines will offer service from IDA.

Annually, the summer travel season ramps up starting with Memorial Day weekend. This year appears to be no different. [National passenger throughput trends](#) over the past few months have shown sustained travel volumes. In the month of April, TSA screened at least 1 million people at airports nationwide every day and that number has continued to steadily increase in May.

The busiest times at the TSA security checkpoint at IDA are 5 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The busiest days to travel are Thursdays and Fridays as well as Sundays and Mondays.

These peaks are driven by the flight departure schedules determined by the airlines. When there is a concentrated number of flight departures over a short period of time, there will be intervals when the number of departing passengers may exceed the capacity of the TSA security checkpoint at IDA. This is why it is essential that travelers arrive prepared, two hours prior to flight departure to allow for completion of every step of the travel process from curb to gate.

Due to the upswing in air travel, TSA has expanded its efforts to hire security screening officers in Idaho and nationwide to ensure checkpoint lanes are fully staffed to screen the ever increasing number of travelers. As an incentive to join the agency, TSA will pay newly-hired TSOs \$500 upon starting with the agency and \$500 after one year of service with TSA. To qualify for the recruitment incentive, the employee must come onboard with TSA between now and September 30, 2021. To view open positions, visit <https://jobs.tsa.gov>.

Over the past several months, TSA has modified its procedures as part of its “Stay Healthy. Stay Secure.” campaign. Travelers departing IDA and airports across the country can expect to see:

- All security officers wearing face masks and gloves during the screening process. Security officers will change their gloves after each screening position rotation, after a pat-down or upon a traveler’s request.
- All travelers wearing a mask in the airport and at TSA airport screening checkpoints. The federal requirement to wear a mask has been extended until September 13, 2021. Face coverings need to cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of the face without gaps. A TSA officer will ask travelers to briefly adjust their mask for ID verification purposes. Travelers without a mask may be denied entry, boarding, or continued transport. Failure to comply with the mask requirement can result in civil penalties.
- Social distancing leading up to and in the security checkpoint environment.
- Increased frequency and intensity of cleaning and disinfecting surfaces in the security checkpoint including bins. This is no substitute for practicing good hygiene while traveling. Travelers are encouraged to wash their hands before and after going through the checkpoint.

Here are some additional tips to remember during the summer travel season:

Step 1: Pack smart

Travelers should be aware of the contents of their carry-on bags and make sure they are not bringing prohibited items to the security checkpoint. To determine whether an item is allowed or prohibited in carry-on luggage, download the *MyTSA* app and use the “Can I Bring?” feature. By planning ahead, travelers can avoid a bag check and reduce the potential for cross-contamination. Another option is to contact @AskTSA on Twitter or Facebook Messenger to get answers to your travel questions.

Step 2: Secure items in your carry-on

When removing items from pockets such as phones, keys or loose change, travelers should secure them in their carry-on bags instead of placing them in bins. Avoid placing personal items in bins since those are a common use item and should be treated as such.

Step 3: Traveling with hand sanitizer

TSA is allowing one liquid hand sanitizer container, up to 12 ounces per passenger, in carry-on bags. Passengers may also bring hand wipes of any size or quantity through security checkpoints.

Step 4: Enroll in TSA PreCheck®

People can “Travel with Ease” and experience a smoother screening process by enrolling in TSA PreCheck®. Eligible travelers do not need to remove shoes, belts, light outerwear, laptops, electronics larger than a cell phone or travel-size liquids from carry-on luggage including at IDA. There is an enrollment center located at 461 May Street in Idaho Falls. It is open Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. In April 2021, 98% of travelers eligible for TSA PreCheck waited five minutes or less to be screened at airports nationwide. Another benefit of the program is that children 12 and under are permitted to use the TSA PreCheck lane when traveling with an eligible parent or guardian on the same itinerary.

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