8 Ways to Not Be a Total Jerk at TSA



Let’s all make a pact to make our holiday and business travels more pleasant for everyone around us.

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I’m sorry to be so rude, but this needs to be said to all of the millions of air travelers out there. Yes, everyone dreads standing on long lines and going through TSA security at the airport, but what makes it even worse some days is the behavior of the passengers. Here are some not-so-friendly pointers so you’re not “that guy” or “that gal” at TSA:

1. Be prepared when you walk up to the TSA officer

Unless you're a CLEAR member, they're going to want to see your boarding pass and a driver's license or passport. This should not be a surprise. Get ready while you're waiting in line, not up at the podium, holding everyone up. If your boarding pass is on your phone (pro tip), have your phone unlocked and opened to the pass.

2. Know the rules for what's allowed in your carry-on luggage

If you've not traveled on an airplane since 2001, or if you've hit your head on the way to the airport, the rules for what is permissible are here and printed on a million signs at the TSA checkpoint. They're rules, not suggestions. Your pepper spray and Costco-sized cologne are not flying to Detroit with you.

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3. Pick the right line

The TSA people will not give you a pass on the TSAPre line if your boarding pass does not say TSAPre on it. Same with premium lines. Same with every line pretty much everywhere. Arguing and holding up everyone else only makes the day longer for us all.

4. Wait your turn

If someone in front of you is taking an extra millisecond to load their luggage on the belt, CHILL. Cutting in front of them just makes you look more like the self-important jackass you are.

5. Be polite

Stop arguing with TSA Officers. Nearly every week, I watch as passengers argue with TSA officers over some rule that has been in place for years, but they think that somehow they're special and therefore exempt. TSA officers don't care that you just paid $7 for an airport Gatorade. Gulp it or toss it in the garbage with all the other $7 Gatorades.

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6. Slide on down

After your luggage exits the x-ray machine, slide it down to the end and then get yourself together. This allows the belt to continue to move, and other passengers to do the same.

7. Put your bin back after you're done

Unless your butler is here to clean up your mess, do it yourself. The empty bins belong in the empty bin stack at the end of the belt, not cluttering up the works for everyone else.

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8. Get there early

I love when a passenger tries to cut in line, then argues with a TSA officer with the indignant, "But I'm late for my flight!" News flash: WE'RE ALL IN A RUSH. That's why we're at the airport, not the bus station. Relax, get there early, or fly private.

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