

Refusing to wear a mask on an airplane could now cost you up to \$3,000 in fines

Refusing to wear a mask on an airplane is about to get really expensive. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced that it was doubling civil penalties for those who refuse to comply with federal mask mandates on commercial airlines, at airports, or on certain forms of public transportation like passenger rail or intercity buses. Repeat offenders could now face fines of up to \$3,000.

First time offenders will be fined \$500-\$1,000, up from the previous amount of \$250. Second offenders will be fined \$1,000-\$3,000. The new TSA penalties, which are separate from the fines issued by the Federal Aviation Administration for unsafe behavior, will take effect September 10th.

"Wearing a mask protects the traveling public"

"Wearing a mask protects the traveling public and all of the personnel who make the travel experience safe, secure, and comfortable," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas in a statement. "We will continue to enforce the mask mandate as long as necessary to protect public health and safety."

The day after he took office, President Joe Biden issued an executive order requiring masks to be worn while traveling by airplanes, buses, or trains. It was an abrupt change from his predecessor Donald Trump, who actively blocked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from issuing a similar order in 2020.

That mandate had been set to expire in September 2021, but the TSA today extended it through January 18, 2022.

Enforcement of the mask mandate generally falls on airline crews, who have had to deal with a sharp increase in unruly passengers since flights resumed after lockdown. So far this year, the FAA logged 4,184 unruly passenger reports, the vast majority of which – 3,057 – involved mask wearing. Flight attendant union leader Sara Nelson recently said that the situation with poorly behaved passengers on planes was “completely nuts.”

<https://www.theverge.com/2021/9/9/22665625/tsa-mask-mandate-airplane-fines-covid-train-bus>