

Aviation Security: Liquids, Aerosols and Gels

Frequently Asked Questions

8 December 2006

ITEMS PASSENGERS CAN TAKE ON AIRCRAFT

1. Who will be affected by the restrictions?

Everybody flying to and from Australia.

2. So it doesn't apply at domestic airports?

No, the restrictions on liquids, aerosols and gels will not apply to passengers travelling on Australian domestic flights, at domestic terminals and airports. However, this will be kept under continuing review in consultation with security agencies and industry. Enhanced screening of international flights is consistent with the evolving international practice.

Domestic passengers who are connecting to overseas flights will need to think ahead about the contents of their carry-on baggage.

3. What can be taken on board?

Passengers can still take on board all items they would normally take in carry-on baggage. This includes cameras; personal music devices; books; items of clothing and so on. Additionally, existing weight and size restrictions for carry-on baggage remain the same.

You can also take on board items purchased after the screening point, including duty free.

4. So, what has changed?

Restrictions have been introduced to limit the amount of liquids, aerosols and gels that can be taken through the screening point. Each container should not have a capacity greater than 100 millilitres and all containers should fit comfortably in a resealable plastic bag. The bag must be transparent and resealable, no larger than one litre (20cm x 20cm), such as a freezer bag sold in most supermarkets.

This means containers with substances including drinks, creams, perfumes, sprays, gels and toothpaste have to be carried in a re-sealable transparent plastic bag and be screened separately.

5. Why cover all liquids?

Present-day machines cannot distinguish one liquid from another quickly enough to allow for an efficient airport screening process. That is why these new restrictions would apply to all liquids except for those in quantities too small to make effective bombs.

6. Any exceptions?

Exceptions will be made for passengers with medical conditions and quantities of baby food required for the flight, and intended to be consumed onboard. These items may be subject to additional security checks.

7. Why the requirement to use a transparent plastic bag?

We are adopting the solution used in Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, which has proven successful at keeping delays to a minimum whilst delivering improved security.

By experiment, experts found that, if you pack several containers of 100 millilitres each into a plastic bag of one litre capacity, the total quantity of liquids was in the range of 450-500 millilitres.

The benefit of the transparent plastic bag is that makes it easy to display and inspect the liquids you are carrying, while protecting your carry-on baggage against leaks.

8. Will Australian procedures be the same as other countries?

While the details of the procedures still have to be worked out, Australia's screening procedures will harmonise with the action already taken by Canada, European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The procedures will also fit with other international requirements expected to be introduced in the near future.

9. When will they take effect?

It is proposed that these enhanced security measures be introduced on 31 March 2007.

10. Will the new rules cause problems at airports?

The Australian Government understands that the new rules will affect airport security staff, airlines, airport retailers and passengers and we are working hard to ensure that the rules are fair and communicated effectively to the travelling public.

Overseas experience suggests that once travellers are familiar with the measures, delays are minimal.

11. What is the Government doing to communicate these new restrictions?

The Australian Government will undertake an extensive communication campaign on the new restrictions. The Government will consult widely with industry to ensure a smooth transition in the implementation of these new restrictions and minimise the impact on business and the travelling public.

In addition the Government is also investing in additional training for screeners on the new procedures to apply at airports to maintain the speed and quality of screening,.

12. Is Australia facing a higher level of threat from terrorism?

In spite of the high level of activity that has followed the discovery of the terrorist plot to bomb a number of international passenger aircraft from the United Kingdom to the United States, there is no intelligence to suggest the need to change Australia's counter terrorism alert level. The national counter terrorism alert level remains at MEDIUM.

8 December 2006