



Contact: Lorie Dankers
 TSA Public Affairs
 (206) 743-1497
lorie.dankers@tsa.dhs.gov
 @TSA_Pacific

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TSA breaks record again for firearm discoveries
 at Denver International Airport and nationally in 2022**

DEN ranks seventh among airports nationwide for firearms found in carry-on luggage

DENVER - Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers at Denver International Airport (DEN) discovered 156 firearms in travelers’ carry-on luggage in 2022, setting a new record for firearm finds at DEN’s three security checkpoints. Every one of these firearms was discovered during the routine X-ray screening of carry-on property. Nationwide last year, TSA officers found 6,542 firearms at 262 different airports.

Below is a summary of TSA firearm discoveries locally and nationally for the past four years:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
DEN totals:	126	140	104	141	156
National totals:	4,239	4,432	3,257	5,972	6,542



DEN ranked seventh nationally for the number of firearm discoveries by TSA officers in 2022. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport topped the list with 448 firearm finds, the most ever recorded at any airport since the inception of TSA. Dallas Fort Worth International Airport came in second with 385 followed by Houston’s George Bush Intercontinental Airport with 298; Nashville International Airport with 213 and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport with 196. Orlando International Airport; Austin-Bergstrom International Airport; Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and Tampa International Airport round out the Top 10.

In 2022, TSA screened approximately 761 million passengers and crew at airports nationwide. TSA officers across the country discovered firearms in carry-on luggage at a rate of 8.6 firearms per million passengers screened. Stated another way, TSA detected one firearm for every 116,394 travelers screened.

At DEN, TSA screened nearly 21.4 million departing passengers and crew in 2022, making it the 10th busiest airport for TSA security checkpoint screening operations. TSA officers at DEN discovered firearms in carry-on luggage at a rate of 7.3 firearms per million passengers screened. This calculates to a rate of one firearm discovery for every 137,175 travelers screened.

“TSA at DEN has the distinction of being in the Top 10 nationally for the number of firearms brought by departing travelers to the security checkpoint. This is not the type of recognition we are seeking,” said TSA Federal Security Director for Colorado Larry Nau. “I am asking all travelers to do better this year by checking the contents of carry-on luggage prior to coming to the airport and packing firearms properly for transport on a commercial aircraft. For those who choose not to follow the rules, you will have contact with airport law enforcement and face a stiff civil penalty.”

When a TSA officer sees the image of a firearm on the X-ray screen, TSA immediately notifies the local airport law enforcement agency, which responds to the security checkpoint. A law enforcement officer removes the firearm from the X-ray tunnel and makes contact with the traveler. What happens to the firearm and the traveler is up to the discretion of the airport law enforcement agency.

In addition to potential criminal citations for bringing a firearm in carry-on luggage, TSA can levy a civil penalty against the traveler. Among the factors TSA considers when determining the civil penalty amount include whether the firearm was loaded and whether there was accessible ammunition. Even if a traveler has a concealed weapons permit, firearms are not permitted in carry-on luggage.

Individuals who violate rules regarding traveling with firearms will have Trusted Traveler status and TSA PreCheck® expedited screening benefits revoked for a period of time. The duration of the disqualification will depend upon the seriousness of the offense and if there is a repeated history of violations.

Firearms can be transported on a commercial aircraft only if they are unloaded, packed in a locked, hard-sided case and placed in checked baggage. Any type of replica firearm is also prohibited in carry-on baggage and must be transported in checked luggage.



At the airport during the check-in process, a passenger needs to go to the airline ticket counter to declare the firearm, ammunition and any firearm parts. Prior to traveling, passengers are encouraged to check gun laws and regulations at their destination to ensure they are in compliance with local and state laws. TSA also recommends travelers check with their airline prior to their flight to ensure they comply with any airline-specific requirements.

TSA has additional traveler information specifically related to the [transportation of firearms and ammunition](#). A full summary of TSA’s [civil penalties for prohibited items](#) is also available.

TSA reminds passengers to be aware of the contents of their carry-on bag prior to coming to the security checkpoint. TSA has multiple resources available to passengers to help them determine whether an item is permitted in carry-on baggage, checked baggage or not at all.

Travelers can use the [“Can I Bring”](#) feature on the TSA website or on the TSA mobile app, *myTSA*. Travelers can also Tweet or Message “@AskTSA” if they have a travel question or are unsure if an item is allowed through security in a carry-on bag. Just snap a picture or send a question and get real-time assistance daily from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. MST.

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