

Flying to the Trail

Follow government regulations to get to the trailhead with all your gear.

Today's rapidly changing air travel regulations make it difficult to know which hiking gear is permitted on airplanes and whether it is allowed as carry-on or as checked luggage. While the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) decides minimum requirements, matters are further complicated since individual airlines can set their own policy, so be sure to check with your airline before you fly.

TSA Regulations, as of May 2012

- Hiking poles are allowed to be checked in, but never as carry-on.
- Animal repellent (such as bear spray) is a tricky issue. It can be checked IF it is less than four ounces and contains less than 2% of the active CS or CN ingredient. Since most products do not meet this requirement, it is best to leave the bear spray at home and buy it upon arrival.
- Aerosol insecticides, such as OFF![®], are not permitted as checked or carry on items regardless of size.
- Knives and tools always belong in checked luggage. This would also include items such as ice picks, shovels, or ice axes.
- Stoves can be carried on or checked in only if they are empty and cleaned so that no vapors or residue are left. Simply emptying a canister or stove is not enough. They must be emptied and allowed to sit open outdoors for at least 6 to 8 hours. Avoid using water to clean your stove since it takes longer to dry and could rust your gear. Pressurized containers, such as a butane/propane mix are not allowed.
- No fuel is allowed, checked or otherwise. This includes Sterno cans and Esbit tablets. Lighter fluid is also prohibited. Torch lighters, which burn a blue flame of high intensity and with the power to resist winds are also not permitted.
- Passengers are allowed one book or box of safety matches as carry-on only. Strike anywhere matches and waterproof matches, however, are not allowed in carry-on or checked luggage.



For the most up-to-date information about prohibited items, please visit http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/assistant/editorial_1187.shtm for special items pertaining to camping or <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm> for all items.

This fact sheet was originally created by and is reprinted with permission of American Hiking Society