

GE Security Offers Tips on Packing Checked Baggage

Travelers are well aware of what they can and cannot carry onto airplanes thanks to well publicized restrictions and color photos at security check points, but what about checked baggage?

Holiday packing, with volumes of gifts and vacation equipment, can prove especially tricky for checked luggage. Before you pack that roadside emergency kit for your grandmother or that expensive cigar lighter for your dad, think twice. GE Security, maker of the CTX series of explosives detection systems (EDS) used in airports around the world, offers the following tips for packing checked baggage.

- Batteries not included: If you are packing gifts like electronic toys, computer equipment or power tools, you should know that spare lithium batteries are not allowed in checked luggage. They pose a risk for accidental fires and explosions in the cargo hold. You can take a certain number of spares in your carry-on bag. For more information, go to http://safetravel.dot.gov/whats_new_batteries.html
- No smoking ban: Contrary to what you might think, matches and lighters are easier to carry on than to check. You can carry on one small pack of matches and a small, approved lighter with fluid, but no matches and only empty lighters are allowed in checked luggage. For more information on prohibited items, go to <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>
- It's the thought that counts: especially the fact you need to think twice about whether a cool "kit" includes a banned substance. The ban on flares and fire extinguishers will affect certain roadside assistance kits, and if you are "re-gifting" that camp stove you used just once, be sure to clean out all fuel and fumes.
- Static cling: thinking of packing that anti static spray for your New Years outfit? Sorry, it's among the aerosols not allowed in any baggage. Some other personal care aerosols are allowed—for more information see http://safetravel.dot.gov/index_aerosols.html
- Don't wrap ahead: it's a well known rule, but worth repeating. If you must, use gift bags with loose tissue that are easy to search.
- Not banned but not smart: remember that x-ray equipment will damage film, so carry-on is better. As always, carry your most valuable items with you. And if you must lock your checked luggage, be sure to use TSA compatible locks. Otherwise you might find your lock cut due to inspection requirements when you reach your destination. Information on these locks is readily available at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/assistant/locks.shtm>
- More information about holiday travel requirements and safety is available at www.tsa.gov.