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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **TSA warns about frequency of guns carried in Oklahoma airport security checkpoints**

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK. --Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officials are concerned about the frequency that they are seeing travelers carry handguns to security checkpoints at airports in the state of Oklahoma – Will Rogers World Airport in Oklahoma City (OKC), Tulsa International Airport (TUL), Stillwater Regional Airport (SWO) and Lawton/Ft. Sill Regional Airport (LAW). Most of those guns are found to be loaded.

“The most common excuse we hear is that someone forgot that they had their gun with them,” said Preston Smolinski, TSA’s Federal Security Director for airports in the state. “That’s no excuse. If you own a firearm, you need to know where it is at all times. It’s part of being a responsible gun owner.”

The TSA teams at Oklahoma airports detected a combined 95 guns at the security checkpoints in 2021 and so far they’ve caught eight more guns this year. TSA officers at OKC have stopped three guns, officers at SWO have found one gun and officers at TUL have caught four guns so far in 2022.

Passengers are permitted to travel with firearms in checked baggage if they are properly packaged and declared at their airline ticket counter. Firearms must be unloaded, placed in a hard-sided locked case, and packed separately from ammunition. Then the locked case must be taken to the airline check-in counter to be declared. TSA has details on how to properly travel with a firearm posted on its [website](#).

“Being prepared to travel by air requires planning and preparation. Making sure that your firearm doesn’t travel on an aircraft with you is important for everyone’s safety. When a firearm is discovered at the security checkpoint, everything stops which impacts everyone trying to get through the checkpoint and to their flight. Help us make this busy travel season a great experience at OKC by paying attention to what you are taking with you through airport screening.” said Jeff Mulder, A.A.E., Director of Airports for Oklahoma City and OKC Airport Trust.



A properly packed firearm sits in a hard-sided case and is locked. This case must then be taken to the check-in counter for the airline to transport it in the belly of the plane. (TSA photo)

### TSA firearms catches at Washington area airport checkpoints 2016 to 2022

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 As of 2/22/22
Will Rogers World Airport (OKC)	42	50	28	46	3
Tulsa International Airport (TUL)	39	29	27	48	4
Stillwater Regional Airport (SWO)	1	4	1	1	1
Lawton/Ft Sill Regional Airport (LAW)	0	1	1	0	0
Total	82	84	57	95	8

TSA reserves the right to issue a civil penalty to travelers who bring weapons with them to a checkpoint. Civil penalties for bringing a handgun into a checkpoint can stretch into thousands of dollars, depending on mitigating or aggravating circumstances. This applies to travelers with or without concealed gun carry permits because even though an individual may have a concealed carry permit, it does not allow for a firearm to be carried onto an airplane. The complete list of [civil penalties is posted online](#). If a traveler with a gun is a member of TSA PreCheck®, that individual will lose their TSA PreCheck privileges.

“The penalties are stiff for carrying a gun to a checkpoint,” Smolinski said. “You could face criminal penalties on top of federal civil citations that can be extremely costly. My advice is to not make the mistake of bringing your gun to the checkpoint in the first place. We’re happy to help transport your firearm. All we ask is that you pack it safely and properly for your flight.”



TSA officers at OKC Airport prevented a traveler from bringing this loaded handgun onto a flight. (TSA photo)



TSA officers at TUL Airport stopped a traveler from bringing this ammunition onto a plane earlier this year. (TSA photo)

Travelers are responsible for the contents of bags and TSA recommends that travelers go through their carry-on and checked bags before they head to the airport to ensure that they have no illegal or prohibited items inside. Carrying a gun to an airport checkpoint carries a stiff federal civil penalty that can run into the thousands of dollars. Even if someone has a concealed carry permit, it does not allow for a firearm to be carried onto an airplane.

Firearm possession laws vary by state and locality and passengers should do their homework to make sure that they are not violating any local firearm laws. Travelers should also contact their airline as they may have additional requirements for traveling with firearms and ammunition.

Nationwide, TSA officers detected 5,972 guns at airport security checkpoints last year. Eighty-six percent of those guns were loaded.

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*The Transportation Security Administration was created to strengthen the security of the nation's transportation systems and ensure the freedom of movement for people and commerce. TSA uses a risk-based strategy and works closely with the transportation, law enforcement and intelligence community to set the standard for excellence in transportation security. For more information about TSA, please visit our website at [tsa.gov](http://tsa.gov).*