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Denver Office: <http://www.DenverHomeLiving.com> - (303) 816-9199 Office

Defensive Flying Tips



Most airline trips are uneventful. However, you can take steps to reduce even further your chances of encountering problems. Here is some advice for "defensive flying."

- When selecting a flight, remember that a departure early in the day is less likely to be delayed than a later flight, due to "ripple" effects throughout the day. If you book the last flight of the day, you could get stuck overnight.
- If you have a choice between two connections and the fares and service are equivalent, choose the one with the less-congested connecting airport. This reduces the risk of misconnecting. Also consider potential adverse weather when choosing a connecting city.
- Consider paying by credit card, which provides certain protections under Federal credit regulations. For example, in all recent airline bankruptcies passengers who had charged their fare and were not provided service were able to have their credit card company credit their account for the amount of the fare.
- If possible, pick up your ticket from a travel agency or from one of the airline's airport or city ticket offices. Airline procedures for replacing a ticket that you claim was lost in the mail can be inconvenient. Safeguard your ticket after you receive it; it is an accountable document and has value, much like cash. Keep a separate record of the ticket number.



- Bring a photo I.D. when you fly. For security reasons, most airlines are requiring such identification at check-in. Also, airlines don't permit tickets to be sold or given to other persons. Make sure your name on the ticket is exactly the same as it appears on the I.D.
- As soon as you receive your ticket, check to make sure all of the information on it is correct, including your name. Have any necessary corrections made immediately.
- Keep checking your fare after you buy your ticket. Fares change all the time and if that same fare goes down before you fly, the airline will often refund the difference. But you have to ask.
- Call a day or two before your flight to reconfirm your reservation. Flight schedules sometimes change, and while airlines usually call to notify you if this happens, it's wise to double-check.
- Check in early. Airlines rescind specific advance seat assignments 30 minutes before scheduled departure, even if you already have your boarding pass. You can lose your entire reservation if you haven't checked in 10 minutes before scheduled departure time on a domestic flight (longer on international flights). Allow time for traffic and parking problems. If a flight is oversold, the last passengers to check in are the first to be bumped, even if they have met the 10-minute deadline.
- Check your ticket immediately after checking in for each flight on your trip. Airline agents accidentally lift two coupons instead of one on occasion.
- If you are "bumped" because your flight is overbooked, read the Overbooking Notice in your ticket, then ask for a copy of the rules mentioned in that notice. This information applies to over sales, where your flight operates and leaves you behind; it does not apply to canceled or delayed flights.
- Before agreeing to accept a travel voucher as compensation for being bumped, ask about restrictions. For example, with some vouchers you can't make a reservation until a few days before you want to fly.



- Put a tag on the outside of your baggage with your name, home address, and home and work phone numbers. The airlines provide free stick-on tags. Most carriers also have "privacy tags" which conceal this information from passersby.
- Put the same information inside each bag, and add an address and telephone number where you can be reached at your destination city.
- Verify that the agent checking your bags attaches a destination tag to each one. Check to see that these tags show the three-letter code for your destination airport. Remove tags from previous trips to avoid confusion.
- If your bag arrives open or unlocked, check immediately to see if any of the contents are missing or damaged.
- Report any baggage problems to your airline before leaving the airport. Insist that the airline fill out a form and give you a copy, even if they say the bag will be in on the next flight. Before leaving the airport, ask the airline if they will deliver the bag without charge when it is found.
- Open your suitcase immediately when you get to your destination. Report any damage to contents or pilferage by telephone right away. Make a note of the date and time of the call, and the name and telephone number of the person you spoke with.

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