



Press Release

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TSA breaks yet another record nationally and statewide for firearm discoveries in 2022

TSA also sets record at BIL for number of firearms discovered in carry-on luggage in a single year

BILLINGS, Montana - Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers in Montana detected a record 50 firearms in travelers' carry-on luggage in 2022, with the greatest number of firearms discovered at Billings Logan International Airport. 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 at Montana airports and nationally for the past five years:

Airport	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
BIL	9	7	6	12	17*
MSO	7	6	4	12	11
BZN	4	10	8	8	10
GPI	1	2	5	7	7
GTF	3	6	1	5	5
HLN	4	3	0	1	0
Montana totals:	28	34	24	45	50*
National totals:	4,239	4,432	3,257	5,972	6,542*

** Record number of firearm discoveries.*

"The trend in Montana mirrors the trend nationwide when it comes to the number of firearms travelers are bringing to the security checkpoint. My hope is that highlighting this issue will serve as an incentive for gun owners to reacquaint themselves with the rules on traveling with a firearm on a commercial aircraft," said TSA Federal Security Director for Montana Kc Wurtsbaugh. "And, for those who don't follow the rules on traveling with a firearm, I am grateful for the TSA officers who work daily to screen all travelers and their carry-on property to ensure that no security threats make it into the cabin of an aircraft."

The five U.S. airports with the most TSA firearm discoveries are Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, which topped the list with 448 firearm finds. 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; Denver 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.

Below is a table summarizing the number of travelers screened for every firearm discovery at Montana security checkpoints last year.

	Number of travelers screened in 2022	Number of travelers screened per TSA firearm find
BIL	411,700	24,217
MSO	448,900	40,809
BZN	1,192,800	119,280
GPI	445,100	63,585
GTF	151,900	30,380
HLN	88,800	NA

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. Law enforcement 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 discretion of airport law enforcement.

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 5 a.m. to 3 p.m. PST.

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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.