

Airport Check-in

Every Monday

ATLANTA

New law leads to fight over guns at airport

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta is reminding the public of a rule that may seem obvious to many travelers: No guns are allowed at the airport unless they're locked in a hard case and packed in checked luggage.

The airport is reiterating the statement because some may be confused by a new state law that expands the rights of Georgia gun owners. House Bill 89, which went into effect Tuesday, allows Georgia residents with firearm licenses to bring concealed weapons onto public transportation, in state parks and in restaurants that earn at least half their revenue from food.

By Roger Yu
USA TODAY

In a press conference last week, Ben DeCosta, the airport's general manager, said the new law does not change the no-guns policy at the airport. "Our legal team has reviewed (the bill) and has determined that despite the passage of this legislation, the airport continues to fall under the public gathering exception found in the (state law)."

The airport's position isn't sitting well with Republican state Rep. Tim Bearden. In an interview with *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the author of the law threatened to show up at the airport with a gun. DeCosta said Bearden would be arrested if he did. "I said I have family to pick up at the airport (Tuesday), and I had every intention of exercising my legal rights," Bearden said.

Bearden changed his mind and joined as co-plaintiff — along with gun rights group Georgia Carry — in a federal lawsuit challenging the airport's policy last week. "We put this in the proper venue, and that's the court."



By Sam Leinen

New airline: SeaPort has begun Portland, Ore.-Seattle flights.

PORTLAND, Ore.

New service flies to Seattle

At a time when several airlines are going under, a new air service has launched between Portland, Ore., and Seattle. SeaPort Airlines began flying last Monday, using nine-seat Pilatus PC-12 aircraft to link the two Northwest cities.

SeaPort offers eight round trips Monday through Friday and four on weekends. Because flights take off from a private terminal at Portland International, passengers don't have to clear security and can show up as late as 15 minutes before departure.

The 40-minute flights land at Boeing Field, which is closer to downtown Seattle than Seattle-Tacoma International. In all, the downtown-to-downtown travel time is about 90 minutes, compared with more than three hours to drive or fly commercially, says SeaPort co-founder Kent Craford. An unrestricted round-trip ticket costs about \$300.

MIAMI

Fliers flow more quickly through security

Travelers at Miami International are passing through the security checkpoints at a faster pace, says the top Transportation Security Administration official overseeing the airport.

Redesigning the checkpoints and tinkering with staffing policy largely did the trick, according to Mark Hatfield, TSA's federal security director for Miami.

In February, only 26% of passengers waited 10 minutes or less at its eight checkpoints. Since May, about 90% of passengers wait 10 minutes or less, he says.

TSA employees at MIA used to work full time, leading to some idle time between peak travel periods.

Now, about a quarter of its employees work part time, allowing the TSA to assign more people to the checkpoints during busy hours.

A mobile unit of TSA officers was also formed to be deployed to busy spots throughout the day, particularly to Terminals D and E, which process more than 60% of the airport's traffic.

MINNEAPOLIS

Device-charging stations in 2 terminals

Minneapolis-St. Paul now has 22 charging stations throughout the Lindbergh and Humphrey Terminals. Sponsored by Samsung Mobile, the 8½-foot-tall towers include four outlets per station, letting travelers recharge their electronic devices for free.

Similar stations are available at five other airports: New York's John F. Kennedy and LaGuardia, Los Angeles, Orlando and Dallas/Fort Worth.

Look for the **Legal Monday**

feature in our News Section,
page 5A.



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