

# Travel Tips

LGBTQ+ people face unique obstacles while traveling, especially in airports and other settings where they are required to provide photo identification. For transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, and genderqueer travelers, interactions with security agents and other officers may feel stressful, especially since these travelers may undergo additional questioning.

Below are some recommendations for navigating those situations.

## **Name and Gender on Passports and Identification Cards**

TSA regulations require people to provide their name, gender, and date of birth when making airline reservations. The name, gender, and date of birth needs to match the government-issued photo ID provided when going through airport security.

If you have different names and/or genders listed on different IDs, you can choose which ID to provide, as long as your photo ID matches your reservation. As you enter airport security, TSA officers will check your documents to make sure the information on your ID matches the information on your boarding pass. Your current gender presentation does NOT need to match the gender marker on your ID (or gender presentation in your ID photo), and TSA officers should not comment on this.

If someone else books your ticket, make sure this person provides the information that matches the government-issued ID you will use at the airport. The gender marker on your boarding pass needs to match the gender on government-issued ID that you show TSA officers as you go through security.

## **Changing Name and Gender on your Passport**

According to the U.S. Department of State, passports are valid for different lengths of time depending on whether you have completed your transition or are in the process of transitioning.

For detailed application information on how to complete the change of sex marker on your passport, please visit the Department of State [passport renewal](#) website.

You will need to fill out a [DS-11 form](#) and provide supporting documentation that includes:

- ID resembling your current appearance
- Passport photo resembling your current appearance
- Certificate from a physician that validates whether your gender transition is either in process or complete
- Proof of legal name change (if applicable)

For more recommendations about name change and gender marker change, please see the National Center for Transgender Equality's [passport guide](#).



(Photo Credit: The Daily Mail)

## **Hormone Prescriptions**

Check with your physician about what steps to take in order to travel with hormones and how to navigate customs, both in the U.S. and abroad.

If you are traveling with any form of needles, you will likely need a note from your physician to bring them through TSA and customs.

## **Navigating Airport Security**

The [National Center for Transgender Equality](#) also offers many resources that address the specific obstacles transgender people face while flying and navigating TSA procedures. Here are a few of their recommendations.

### ***Pat-downs***

At airport checkpoints, pat downs are the only alternative to going through a body scanner and may be required if the scanner registers an anomaly on your body. Scanners may flag non-personal items, such as paper or coins in a pocket; however, they may also flag prosthetics or binding garments.

If you are pulled aside for a pat-down, the TSA officer who performs the inspection is required to be of your same gender. Usually, this is based on your gender presentation. Transwomen should be searched by a female TSA officer, and transmen should be searched by a male TSA officer. If TSA officers are unsure of who should perform the pat-down, they should ask you discreetly and respectfully. The gender listed on your identification cards should not matter.

You have the right to ask for a private screening, and you may bring a witness of your choosing with you.

If a TSA officer questions you about objects under your clothing during the pat-down, such as binders, breast foam, packers, or other prosthetics, briefly explain what the objects are. While this experience may feel stressful, try to stay calm and speak in a straight-forward manner.

You should NEVER be required to lift, remove, or raise an article of clothing to reveal a prosthetic or be asked to remove it. If a TSA officer asks you to do this, ask to speak to a supervisor and calmly explain the situation.

### ***Personal Items***

If you are traveling with medically prescribed items, such as syringes or dilators, it is recommended that you carry proof of the medical necessity of the item(s). Before your trip, ask your doctor for a letter in which they

state the medical necessity of the item(s). If possible, store medical devices in the original pharmacy packaging that includes prescription labels.

Consider packing these items in checked baggage, if possible. Be prepared to briefly explain the purpose of the item(s), if TSA agents ask.

### ***TSA Notification Card***

A TSA Notification Card lets TSA officers know if you have a health condition, medical device, and/or disability that might affect your security screening. You can hand this pre-printed card to TSA personnel to discreetly communicate with them about a personal item, medical condition, or other relevant information.

The [template for the TSA Notification Card](#) is available on the TSA website.

### ***Communicating with TSA Officers***

All travelers have the right to be treated with respect, dignity, and discretion. If you encounter any issues, politely ask to speak to a supervisor. Communicate the problem calmly and clearly, state your ideas for a reasonable solution, and ask the TSA personnel to take appropriate actions.

It is important to assert your rights; however, it is equally important to do so in a respectful and non-confrontational manner. In a potentially stressful and overwhelming situation, we want you to feel confident advocating for yourself and your rights without letting the situation escalate. Take a deep breath and focus on working with others to find the solution to the problem. We advise against displaying aggressive behavior toward TSA agents and other passengers, especially as that may result in criminal charges.

### ***TSA Support***

Travelers with questions about medical equipment, prostheses, or other assistive devices or about medical privacy can call the TSA Cares hotline in advance of their trip at 1-855-787-2227 to speak with a trained representative. For other advance travel questions, you can call TSA's Contact Center at 1-866-289-9673, or submit a question via [TSA's website](#).

